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# MY STUDY AND OTHER ESSAYS

BY  
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## PREFACE.

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THE discussions contained in this volume are in great part republished from various periodicals. They have been so greatly enlarged, however, that nearly one-half of the material is new. The large space given to the subject of future retribution and kindred themes, is the natural sequence of the revival of public interest in them in recent years. Some repetitions of thought will be observed, which could scarcely have been avoided in essays of this kind which do not profess to be a continuous treatise. Such material has been eliminated wherever it could be without damage to the argument in hand. The author can give no better reason for this republication than the request of many correspondents, strangers to him, and the hope that the enlargement of the essays may render them more helpful to minds interested in the class of subjects to which they belong.



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## MY STUDY.



# MY STUDY: AND OTHER ESSAYS.

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## I.

### MY STUDY.

#### PART I.

IT has been my lot to live for thirty years on a spot which has been the scene of a great, though unwritten, history. At the time when Andover Seminary was founded, as is well known, the old faith of New England was decadent. Its stanch friends were few. But one of the old churches of Boston was loyal to it. Even that one was of the school which, in the church-history of Scotland, is significantly titled “moderate.” Its aged pastor was not the man to lift up a fallen banner, and lead a forlorn hope. A few godly men resolved that there should be one school of biblical learning in New England where a collegiately educated and orthodox clergy could be trained for the defense of the theology of the Pilgrims.

The “house I live in” was one of those built for the professors of the new “divinity school.”

Its occupant, in his daily walk to his lecture-room, leaped from stone to stone through the swamp of a whortleberry lot in which Phillips Hall stood. The driver of the daily stage to the metropolis used to point out to his merry passengers the hillock on which the hall was erected as “Brimstone Hill,” in token of the fiery and nauseous theology which he had been told was taught there. The tradition is, that one of the passengers on a wintry day responded by thrusting his hands out of the window, as if to warm them at a blazing fire. The *sobriquet* followed Dr. Griffin to the pastorate, to which he was soon called, of the Park-street Church in Boston. “Brimstone Corner” was the polite and fragrant cognomen which the angle of Tremont and Park Streets bore in the popular dialect of the time.

The late Charles Stoddard, Esq., of Boston, for many years the senior deacon of the Old South Church, has told me that he was more than once crowded off the sidewalk by well-dressed enemies of his faith while leading his mission school to church on a Sunday morning. It was not the first nor the last time that “fanatics” have found that they had no rights which “gentlemen” were bound to respect. A drayman in Tremont Street, who had missed his way with a load of sulphur, was once directed by a gentleman, of whom he made inquiry at a crossing, to go and deliver his freight at the house of a man by the name of Griffin which he would find on the door-plate, for “he

was the chief dealer in the article in the city of Boston."

So general and intense was the antipathy to the ancient faith, that it swayed the learned professions, and gave tone to cultivated society. Young men beginning the practice of law or medicine in Boston found that they lost caste by attending an Orthodox church. When Andover Seminary was founded, it was doubtful whether a charter could be obtained from the Legislature. The institution was therefore attached as an annex to Phillips Academy, which already had a charter. Ten years later, when Amherst College was founded in the interest of the same religious views with those represented at Andover, the petition for a charter was again and again refused. The same was true when a charter was sought for the American Board for Foreign Missions.

The bitterness of that controversy was no more acrid than that which commonly attends the beginnings of religious disruptions. But such were the spirits in the air of Massachusetts when Dr. Griffin was called to Andover. In the building of his study he had a magnificent ideal of a working-room for a studious recluse. It filled the southern wing of the house. The morning sun greeted its eastern windows; the noonday sun gave it good cheer as he traveled southward; and the setting sun flooded it with a golden glory, in which few horizons equal that of Andover. The glow which illumined it from sun to sun was a fit emblem of

the light which was to go from it around the world.

Dr. Griffin never occupied it. He was called to the pulpit of the Park-street Church just as he was about to take possession. Dr. Porter, his successor, was a lifelong invalid. Meetings of the faculty and others for conference were therefore held in his study. Thus the spot became memorable. The few leading minds who felt the gravity of the crisis in the history of our churches felt, also, the need of concentration of resources and of mutual alliance. For this purpose they established, in 1812, a weekly meeting for prayer and consultation. Its chief object was to devise ways and means of lifting the old faith of New England from the obsolescence into which it was falling. Then, as now, men called it "moribund." There are things which thrive in dying. That meeting was continued for many years, and was generally held in Dr. Porter's study. I find evidence of but one occasion on which it was held elsewhere.

During all that time that little conclave at Andover was the center of New-England Calvinism. Its regular attendants were seven: Dr. Woods; Professor Stuart; Dr. Porter; Samuel Farrar, Esq., who was then the treasurer of the seminary, and one of the lay-theologians of the time; Dr. John Adams, father of the late Rev. William Adams, D.D., of New York, and then principal of Phillips Academy; Dr. Justin Edwards, the youthful pastor of the Old South Church in Andover; and Mark

Newman, Esq., its senior deacon. To these should be added, as occasional guests, Dr. Griffin of Boston; Dr. Pierson of Andover; Dr. Worcester of Salem; Dr. Morse of Charlestown; Dr. Spring of Newburyport; and, at a later period, Dr. Wisner of the Old South Church in Boston; and Jeremiah Evarts, "the silent man," father of the present Hon. William M. Evarts of New York. These came, as occasion called them, to consult with the wise men on "Brimstone Hill."

In that thoughtful and devout conference were started the germs of great ideas. Here, as I write, those grave and reverend men seem to sit around me in grand council. I see their earnest faces. I hear their awe-struck voices as they kneel in prayer. I listen to their solid and *growing* thought as they talk of fruitful schemes, and throw out spontaneously the seed-thoughts of institutions which are to take their place in God's plans for building states and redeeming nations.

There sits Dr. Woods, slow and bland in speech, wise in counsel, safe in act, and masterly in compromise. Here stands or walks about, peering at the books, Professor Stuart, on whom, as he used to say, "The doctorate would never stick." He is quick in movement, original in plan, and intrepid in execution. The same mercurial traits appear in his professional character which made him the most agile athlete in Yale College fifteen years before. His alert mind keeps his tall, gaunt body in incessant motion. His head is never still. He

rises to shut the door if it is open, and to open it if it is shut, or to work off the overplus of nerve by a needless thrust at the fire. He hurries on the business lest he should not live to see it matured. He is one of the chronic invalids who live in daily lookout for death, and who disappoint themselves by living as he did beyond the full threescore and ten.

Dr. Porter presides, erect, vigilant, and urbane. He is precise to a fault in the proprieties of time and place. His hollow cough is premonitory of the end yet twenty years away. Dr. Justin Edwards, of tall, angular frame, which moves like an ox, is silent till all the rest have had their say. Then he sums up the gist of the matter in a few terse words, which give the practical outcome of the business in hand. His colleagues recognize in his remarks the very wisdom they would have said if they had thought to put it so. There are men who are created to be chairmen of committees. They are born executives. As such they are great men. Other things they do — *as* they do. Dr. Edwards was one of them. Had he been bred to the bar, he would have found his way to the bench. In ancient Athens he would have been one of the Amphictyonic Council.

Great and good men invite caricature. The world does not caricature imbeciles. I remember seeing in my youth a rude woodcut representing the three leading spirits of the Andover Seminary. It portrayed their differences, if not reverently,

yet not untruthfully. As I recall it, after forty years, it pictured a huge, clumsy machine, such as was then used for winnowing wheat. Doctors Porter and Woods and Professor Stuart are hard at work with it, dressed in the professional robe and bands. Dr. Woods is carefully, yet smilingly, as if he entered into the joke of the thing, dropping into the hopper pumpkins of goodly size, which have a rude carving on them of human faces. They remind one of the Jack-o'-lanterns we used to carve with jack-knives in harvest time when the pumpkin-fields were golden. Dr. Porter is picking them up with stately bend as they roll out from below in the form of little preachers, also full dressed in canonical bands and robe ; and he daintily brushes off the dust with a whisk-broom. Professor Stuart is working with might and main, with the impetuous look of a man who is putting his whole soul into it, turning the crank, and bending almost double. To use his own favorite phrase, he is "*totus in illis.*" Dr. Woods exclaims with anxious drawl, "Not-so-fast, Broth-er Stu-art, not-so-fast!" The professor replies with a jerk, "Work away! work away!" Such were the pleasantries behind which conflict was going on in dead earnest.

The caricatures of an age, like its coins, are signs of its most truthful history. These men could afford to be caricatured. We may be very sure that they did not look glum over it. Grave men they were, who took life intensely ; but they

were not of that class of devotees who, in a paroxysm of remorse, resolve that they will never laugh again. They were of too robust grain to be men of disconsolate and despotic conscience. They were believers in the inspiration of the Old Testament, and they took it literally that “there is a time to laugh.” They were men before they were theologians; and they had their comic side, like other men. They suffered no paralysis of the risible muscles. Dr. Porter I never saw: he had passed on before my time. But from what I know of the other two, and of their associates in the Andover Council, I can readily imagine that they at some time relieved the gravity of their long session by a canvass of the uncouth picture, and a hearty laugh over the likenesses so truth-telling of their leaders.

Since the foregoing paragraph was written, I have been informed of an incident which confirms it, and which discloses a new side to the character of Dr. Woods. On one occasion he was seen standing before a shop-window in Cornhill, examining this same caricature of himself and his colleagues. He was so intent upon it, that he did not at first perceive the approach of Dr. Ware,—his chief opponent in the controversy of the time,—who came up behind him. Dr. Ware at length tapped him on the shoulder, and said, “Good-morning, Dr. Woods. I see that you have a new machine at Andover, by which you manufacture Orthodox ministers out of pumpkins.”—“Ye-s,”

said Dr. Woods, with his inimitable deliberation of utterance, “ye-s: don’t-you-want-to-come-up-there, and-be-ground-over?” The sequence need not be told. Good-nature diluted the bitterness of that honorable warfare on both sides.

Those ancient men builded better than they knew, and some of them knew a great deal. Like all religiously earnest men, they thought and planned and acted for far-off coming time. Their life was energized by their faith that this world is to be converted to Jesus Christ. Their hands were on the wheels of its destiny, and they knew it. They felt the prophetic thrill of it in every nerve. They had faith in themselves as men chosen of God to apostolic service. There are men in the service of the Church whom the Church lifts: there are other men who lift the Church. Those Andover pioneers were of the latter class. They had a work of construction and of forecast to do, and they did it with a will.

It is said that every great discovery is a presentiment in somebody’s mind before it is a fact in recorded science. That Andover company contained minds of the premonitory order. They were in profound sympathy with the biblical future of this world. When the prophetic book was unsealed, they were ready with the ways and means for executing its decrees. Had they been prophets, and sons of prophets, they could not have entered into the spirit of the opening age more cordially or more intelligently. Their life’s work was prophecy

fulfilled. They worked as all great workers do, in line with hidden providences and supernatural forces.

It was in that conference in Dr. Porter's study, that the project of American missions to the heathen first took the visible and tangible form which gave rise to the American Board. Judson, Nott, Newell, and Mills, the pioneer missionaries, were in the seminary. Their petition to the General Association of Massachusetts for support in their resolve to preach the gospel to the heathen was drawn up by the advice of the Andover brethren in council, who sent two of their number to advocate it before the fathers at Bradford. It is significant of the wary enterprise which it was thought necessary to practice in broaching the subject, that the names of Rice and Richards, which were at first appended to the memorial, were struck off, lest the Association should be alarmed by too large a number.

It is only in the beginnings of great movements that a timid diplomacy sways action. When the idea central to the movement gets possession of the popular mind, it goes with a rush. In the multitude of counselors all feel safe. Grooves of destiny begin to appear, and safety insures speed. Such was the early history of American missions. The prophetic thought at Andover anticipated what was coming. The group behind the haystack at Williamstown had adjourned to Andover, to find their plans matured, and purpose deepened,

by the inspiration which came from Dr. Porter's study.

One feature of the movement is significant of the moral *pressure* under which both the missionaries and their advisers acted. Under the guidance of their Andover counselors, the young missionaries did not leave their going to the heathen dependent on the readiness of the Massachusetts churches to send them. Their *going* was a foregone conclusion. Go they must: it was fore-ordained. If Massachusetts had not consecrated wealth enough to send them, the Lord had. Could not God raise up men after his own heart from the very stones in the streets of Bradford?

What was the secret of the intense conviction in the Andover conclave, that the gospel *must* be preached to the darkened nations? It was their faith that this is a lost world. Without Christ it is doomed. They saw in vision the long procession of heathen souls unsaved passing on into a lost eternity. They were wakened to a great exigency. It brooked no delay. No dream of heathen probation after death blurred the vividness of their faith. Whatever may be true on that subject, their faith was fixed. They were a unit in it. So were the founders of the seminary and the churches of Massachusetts. The whole splendid structure of American missions to the heathen, with its magnificent history of achievement, had its origin in a profound, undoubting, intense, and unanimous belief that heathen probation began and ended here.

Was the Andover Creed silent about it? It said as little of the Book of Mormon. Polygamy could as normally be taught under its sanction as the discovery of a second probation. They were silent where they saw no reason to speak. They were practical men. It is not the way with practical men to build cob houses of defense against errors of which nobody has ever dreamed. Their action said more than their polemic words. It discloses where and how the wheels of their system of beliefs interlocked. Their whole missionary policy revolved around their faith in the restriction of heathen probation to this one life in this one world. Without that faith, that whole chapter in the history of those times would have been a fable. Those pioneer missionaries would have sought pastorates in the Green Mountains and among the hills of Berkshire. Their advisers in the Andover Conference would have rolled up the map of the heathen world, and put it away for ever.

They were not so taught of God. Their intense faith disclosed itself in a monumental work which continues to this day. Had it been the whole life's work of those seven men to bring into organized being the ideal of American missions to the heathen, they would have lived in the history of the millennium; but that was not the whole.

## II.

### MY STUDY.

#### PART II.

I HAVE told the story of the way in which my study became memorable in the history of the Massachusetts churches, and of its tribute to the organization of American missions to the heathen. Other institutions followed in natural sequence.

Here was originated the American *Monthly Concert of Prayer* for the conversion of the world. Something similar to it in Scotland had caught the eye of the Andover watchmen in their lookout for new ideas. It was talked over and prayed over in this place. Grave doubts were expressed. Would the churches feel interest enough in the heathen to meet and pray for them once a month? The resolve to send four missionaries abroad was regarded by many as a doubtful movement. Dr. Dwight, president of Yale College, thought it unwise. So grave had the responsibility seemed, to those who must bear it, that one who was present when the memorial of the young missionaries was read, says, "We all held our breath." At the first meeting of the American Board at Farmington,

a private parlor held all who were in attendance. They were just six persons. The prospect was not cheering to men of little faith.

What to do at a monthly concert to give it a distinctive character was an open question. One pastor of those times, in relating his pastoral reminiscences, said, "At our first monthly concert we could think of nothing to do but to read the closing prophecies of Isaiah." Even the missionary hymn was not then known to the American churches. Would the missions achieve success enough to sustain such a concert? If they failed, what would be the effect of the re-action? The heathen were a great way off. The experiment was a novelty. It had no history of success to reason from. Would it not be wise to wait until it had?

The wise men of Andover saw the two sides of things. But they were not of dilatory habit when the balance was once struck. They had committed themselves at Bradford to the project of missions to the heathen, and now the way to *create* a history of success was to back them up by concerted prayer. Any thing must succeed which was supported by supernatural auxiliaries. So they reasoned. A circular was sent forth to the churches, and the monthly concert found an unexpected welcome.

Where else in the wide world did so grand and far-reaching an institution ever spring from a beginning so diminutive? Seven men, unknown to

fame, meet for a plain talk in a private house in a country-town of Massachusetts, and their plain talk soon weaves an electric network of concerted prayer around the globe. Response comes from the islands of Pacific seas, and rejoinder from Constantinople and “flowery Ispahan.”

The monthly concert was followed by the annual *Concert of Prayer for Colleges*. This also was one of the creative ideas which went forth from Dr. Porter’s study. When we recall the religious awakenings in our colleges which have so often followed that anniversary, beginning at the very hour of its observance, we can not but revere the inspiration which put that thought into the minds of the men who gathered in this place to inquire of God. That idea of the combination of the forces of prayer for world-wide objects became from that time fixed in the spiritual policy of our churches. Then we first discovered what reduplicated power concert gives to religious enterprise. Concert in prayer reproduced itself in concerted action. It was enough to crown any man’s life’s work to initiate that conception as an executive factor in Christian history. It is the most significant illustration on record of the spiritual unity of the Church, and of its command of invisible resources.

In 1813 one of that vigilant band met with a little book which interested him by its compression of large materials into little space and portable form. The thought struck him, that religious literature may be made cheaper in cost, and cir-

culated widely. He laid the matter before the Andover fraternity, and soon it grew into working-shape in the New-England Tract Society. Andover was the seat of its operations till 1825, when it became the *American Tract Society* at New York.

A little incident has come to my knowledge which illustrates the *range* of forethought, from great to small, and from small to great, which characterized the enterprise of those men. Professor Stuart was then just at the outset of his splendid career as the Father of Biblical Literature in America. He was absorbed in the construction of Hebrew grammars and the conquest of German learning. He was teaching his own printers to set up Hebrew types. Yet he found time to supervise the first edition of American tracts, and he writes to the binder to be sure and make the *covers* attractive to the reader. He believed with George Herbert, that nothing is small in God's service; and so said they all.

Dr. Porter was the son of the Hon. Judge Porter of Tinmouth, Vt. On one of his visits to his father, he heard of a little local society for the aid of young men in their education for the ministry. He called to it the attention of the next conference at Andover. There, as usual, the idea from the Green Mountains expanded into that of a national organization. A meeting was called in Boston, at which four of the Andover professors were appointed to draught a constitution, under

which substantially the *American Education Society* has been in operation seventy years. It has aided in their training for the pulpit more than seven thousand men, most of whom could not otherwise have given to the Church the service of educated mind. More than one-half of the ordained missionaries of the American Board have been of their number, as well as many pastors of metropolitan churches, and many presidents and professors of our schools of learning.

We often laud and magnify the religious newspapers of our land. They rival the pulpit in moral power. The first weekly religious newspaper in the world was originated in the Andover conclave. The way in which it came about gives us a glimpse of the simple and natural processes by which great things were done there. Such things are not done by such men with blast of bugle, and beat of drum. On one evening the desecration of the Lord's Day comes up for discussion. A German conclave on the same topic would have appointed a committee to go home, and consider and inquire and investigate and collate and report on the nature of the Christian sabbath, and what constitutes its desecration. One of the Andover brethren, with quick Saxon sense, asks, "What can be done about it?" Another replies, "Let us prepare short, pithy articles on the subject, and print them in the newspapers." A third responds, "Not a newspaper in the land would publish them." Then comes the upshot of the whole business, "It is

high time that we had a newspaper that will." Here was "The Boston Recorder" in embryo; the original of "The Congregationalist," and the pioneer of all kindred publications in the world. Said Dr. Morse, in writing to Mr. Farrar soon after, "We depend on you at Andover to ripen the plan. We are ready to unite in carrying it into execution."

It was the mission of that group at Andover to "ripen plans" of great things with small beginnings. Theirs were inventive and constructive minds. They illustrated the fact, of which Mr. Froude has made emphatic mention, that hard-headed Calvinist thinkers are long-headed, practical workers. In their thinking, they exalted God: in their working, God honored them. They illustrated also the fact, so often observed in unwritten history, that earnest men, by simply walking in the way of duty, and doing that which most imperatively needs to be done, will inevitably do great things. They can not help it. The plain way of duty is the highway of greatness. The word "ought" is kindred to every great thing in the universe.

They have a custom, in the villages on the Rhine, of anchoring a grist-mill in the middle of the river, where the current is strongest, and making the rapids grind the food of the whole community. The river is a docile laborer. "It asks for no wages," threatens no strikes, and never quits work for a carouse. It puts into the mill a

power independent of drawbacks, and which has no caprices. So let any man plant himself in the midstream of God's plans, and take manful grip at the thing that first comes to hand, working with a will at it, and the current of eternal decree will impart its own momentum to his work, so that it will grow into grand achievement. The law of spiritual gravitation works in line with such men. Every such man stands in the thick of godlike opportunity. So was it with the simple-minded yet eager men of the Andover brotherhood. They seized the thought which came from God to them through the exigency of the time, and did their duty about it like men ; and great things came of it. It was not the scintillation of meteoric genius: it was the gravitation of consecrated common sense. It was more than the founding of an empire to pioneer into the world the weekly religious press.

In a similar manner the *American Home Missionary Society* came to its birth on this spot. The need of pastors for feeble churches was imperative. Pioneer preachers for the founding of churches in the waste places of the West were wanted. It was the ambition of the men at Andover to send an educated ministry westward as fast as emigration could blaze trees for roadways through the wilderness. But how should the churches in regions where commerce was carried on by barter, support pastors who had nothing that was worth barter ? It was a grave question. But to the inventive enterprise of the Andover circle, to ask

it was to answer it. It was not their way to moon over difficulties.

There had been for a considerable time local societies, scattered here and there, limited by State and county lines, for the aid of feeble churches. In a single evening the deliberations at Andover matured a plan for making those isolated associations auxiliary to a national institution which should lift the work up into national importance. The American Home Missionary Society was the result of that evening's session. At this date it has assisted nearly five thousand churches. Most of these have been in localities which could not otherwise have received the ministrations of the gospel in season to give character to the great States of the North-West. Many of them were planted at strategic points at which the dominant moral power ruled the infancy of those States. Here, again, great effects from little causes are illustrated in the history of that fragment of the olden time which we are reviewing.

No more magnificent illustration of the same thing can be found than that furnished by the history of the temperance reform. It is not generally known that all the organizations now existing for the promotion of *abstinence* from intoxicating liquors owe their origin ultimately to the Andover Conference.

Things happened in this wise: in 1814 Dr. Edwards formed in his congregation a society called "The Andover South Parish Society for doing

good." The homeliness of its title suggests the simplicity of its aim. One object named in its constitution was "to promote temperance." His afterthought was, that that method of "doing good" was capable of expansion. He brought it to the notice of his colleagues in Dr. Porter's study. The result was the formation of a society entitled "An Association of Heads of Families for the Promotion of Temperance." The first seven names signed to its pledge of total abstinence were those of members of the little fraternity whose life's work is here recorded. *That was the first organized movement in the world founded on the pledge of entire abstinence from intoxicating drinks.* The same consultations led circuitously to the founding of the American Temperance Society. For several years the Andover brotherhood numbered among its members Rev. Dr. Hewitt, whose career as the "apostle of temperance" has been equaled by no one but that of John B. Gough. His eloquence is remembered to this day, by those who heard it, as something wonderful in the history of public debate.

Few things illustrate so signally the *progressive* ideas of those far-seeing men as these pioneer efforts for a revolution in the drinking-customs of the world. The earlier associations for the purpose, besides being limited in locality, all touched only the surface of the evil which they attempted to remove. They were all founded on the principle of *temperance*, not only as distinct from, but

as opposed to, *abstinence*. The moderate use of intoxicants they encouraged. This was universal in the drinking-usages of society. Its effect had become alarming in its prognostications of the future. An aged clergyman, who had been in his prime at that period, once remarked in my hearing, "It was a wonder that we did not become a generation of drunkards." Intoxication among gentlemen of culture and refinement was too frequent to excite surprise, or to provoke censure. Everybody was expected to make the slip sometimes. Lawyers came to the bar, and judges to the bench, and ministers to the pulpit, occasionally in a state of inebriation. Young preachers at their ordination were sometimes charged not to allow themselves to be intoxicated by the hospitality of their parishioners.

The late Rev. Dr. Hill of Virginia once related his experience in his first pastorate substantially as follows; viz., he rode in the saddle through the outlying districts of his parish, to make his first acquaintance with his people. At every farmhouse the decanter and the wineglass were forthcoming. The good people knew no better way of entertaining their pastor than to make him drunk. He perceived as the afternoon wore on, that he found it difficult to mount his horse. He saw both sides of him at once. He at length said to himself, "John" (if I have his baptismal name correctly), "this will never do: you'll be a drunkard before you know it." *That* advance into an

inebriate ministry was cut short, and a good man saved.

Such was the peril everywhere attendant on a young preacher's career. The popular theory was, that to abstain wholly from spirituous liquors was cowardice; to remove the decanters from the side-board was parsimony; and to pledge one's self or others to total abstinence was a sin against the example of our Lord.

Even so late as 1844 the clergy of Scotland were not emancipated from the old *régime*, if indeed they are now. When the reverend deputation from the "Free Church" came to this country to solicit aid, their countrymen in Boston regaled them with the national punch-bowl. Rev. Dr. Cunningham, in rehearsing afterwards his impressions of New England, said in substance, "Your free churches are a surprise to me, your frame-houses are a novelty, and *your whisky is execrable*."

Nobody thought of disturbing the time-honored custom of moderate drinking, associated as it was with the marriages and funerals and public festivities and private rejoicings of many generations, till that little company of "fanatics" appeared at Andover. The pledge of one clerical association in Massachusetts whose members were frightened at the increase of drunkenness among themselves, ran thus: "We solemnly pledge ourselves not to use more of intoxicating beverages than we conscientiously believe to be good for us!" Could the "National Association of Brewers," in their

late crusade against prohibitory legislation, ask for a more satisfactory pledge than that? Look into the pamphlets and magazines and sermons of those days, and you will find that the Lord's Supper and the marriage at Cana were used as an absolute embargo on all efforts to discourage the moderate use of rum. It is more than a twice-told tale, that New-England rum and New-England missionaries went abroad in the same brig, and nobody saw the farce of it.

The temperance societies at Andover, and after them the national society at New York, were formed upon the idea of keeping temperate people temperate by entire abstinence. Of this idea a European writer, quoted by the late Rev. Dr. Jackson of the Massachusetts Board of Education,—to whose researches I am indebted for many of the facts here narrated,—writes, “On whose mind this great truth first rose is not known. Whoever he was, peace to his memory! He has done more for the world than he who enriched it by the discovery of a new continent.”

The fact undoubtedly is, that that radical reformatory idea was originated by some one of the pioneer reformers at Andover. Certain it is, that they first gave to it a practical development in a great organization of world-wide influence.

As a whole, those *septemviri* were a rare group of men, fitted into a rare juncture of opportunities in the history of the times. Most of them were not extraordinary men, except as the crisis

they were called to meet, and the duties they set their hands to, made them such. They belonged to that class of men whose fidelity to duty in emergencies lifts them above the level of their own ambitions, and surprises the world by their unlooked-for achievement. The very magnitude of the ideas which the work of the hour pressed upon them *weighted* them with such a sense of responsibility, that they could not help living intensely, and working out grand results. They had inherited the old notion of the Pilgrims, of living and working for the whole world, and for all coming times. They lived in sight of all future generations. The glory of a “latter day” gilded their horizon.

Such is the early history of my study. Such are the inspirations which float in the atmosphere around me. In a certain corner near my table, to which my eye turns with reverent sympathy, Dr. Porter, just as he was giving a farewell kiss to his adopted son, breathed his last. His associates in those hallowed gatherings have since then all gone to their rest. Their works do follow them. A great cloud of witnesses come in at my windows to tell me what Andover *was* in the olden time. I am reminded of what Wordsworth says of some of England’s historic names, of men “who called Milton friend :”—

“ Great men have been among us ; hands that penned,  
And tongues that uttered wisdom, better none.”

Another generation and still another have taken their places, to testify what Andover *is*. The results of the comparison can be known only in that day when the “fire shall try every man’s work, of what sort it is.”

### III.

#### MY STUDY.

##### PART III.

SINCE the foregoing narratives were published in "The Congregationalist," the accuracy of their statements has been questioned in two particulars. One is that of the origin of the first religious newspaper. I find, on investigation of all the facts at my command, that the question is more complicated than I supposed. Three or four "Richmonds are in the field." The decision turns on three inquiries; viz., What *is* a religious newspaper, properly so called? when was the first *weekly* religious newspaper founded? and when did the first weekly religious newspaper begin, which *lived*, and has made for itself a history?

Now, it is true that the art of printing existed before the Andover conclave; it is true that a religious periodical, founded partially for the purposes of our present religious newspapers, and issued fortnightly, preceded "The Boston Recorder;" and it is true that another attempt to create such a paper preceded the Andover movement, and its result was short-lived. But I am satisfied, after

reading, as I believe, all that can be said on the three or four sides of the question, that the Andover men *believed* that their movement was entirely original. They did not consciously follow in the track of any predecessor. It is nearly, if not quite, as certain that, understanding by the term "newspaper" the thoroughly equipped and broadly aimed organ which we now mean by it, "The Boston Recorder" was the first *weekly* periodical of the kind which *lived* to create for itself a history. It was the first, not only in this country, but, so far as I know, in the world. Thus stands the matter at present. The details of the evidence would hardly interest the public.

The other particular is the origin of the idea of making *abstinence*, and not temperate drinking, the basis of organized effort for the promotion of temperance. Here, again, I find ample evidence that the Andover men *believed* themselves to be the original pioneers in that direction. They were conscious of no indebtedness to anybody for the idea. Yet to us at this day the idea is so patent and so necessary that we can readily believe that it may have occurred to scores of other minds, and may have been given to the public in speeches and sermons on the alarming increase of intemperance. Our wonder is, that any other idea should have been dominant among the friends of temperance. But I can find no evidence whatever that any organization founded on the pledge of total abstinence preceded the two mentioned in my narrative,

as created at Andover. The probability is, that the idea was original with Dr. Edwards, and that his associates co-operated with him in forming the local societies referred to. It is certain, also, that the consultations here led to consultations elsewhere, out of which all the efficient temperance societies in the land grew.

All such questions of priority, in originating great movements for the growth of civilization, involve the same principles which are involved in the claim of Columbus to the discovery of America. Probably more than one sophomore in college has believed that he has made a great discovery in the fact that Columbus did *not* discover the New World, and that the Northmen did. But history has again and again pricked such bubbles by recognizing two things. One is, that a great idea usually is original to more than one discoverer. Great ideas come when the world needs them. They surround the world's ignorance, and *press* for admission. They succeed in making an aperture for themselves through many minds to which they are original, perhaps as much so to one as to another. It has become a truism, therefore, that great discoveries *must* be contested as to priority in time.

The other principle is, that the honor of the discovery is due to him who first puts the novel idea for which the world is waiting into such *working-form* as to make it practically valuable to mankind. The inventions of the mariner's compass

and of movable types are not properly credited to the Chinese inventors who first gave them being, and then dropped them into the conservative abyss. They are to be credited to the European minds which first made them factors in the world's civilization. So the discovery of America is not due to the Northmen who first made it, but did nothing with it but to gape at it. It is due to Columbus, who first used it to bring the old and new worlds together, and to open savage wilds to the crowded populations of other continents.

On the same principles, and by the same tests, the men of the Andover Conference are entitled justly to all that has been claimed for them. The vital points in the claim are two: first, that they were consciously original in the great ideas which they conceived; secondly, that they were the practical pioneers who first put those ideas to use in institutions which have lived to create a history.

## IV.

### VIBRATORY PROGRESS IN RELIGIOUS BELIEFS.

THE world's advances in great ideas commonly imitate the movement of a pendulum. Conquest of a great principle is rarely made and held fast in its healthy and balanced mean till the human mind has swung forth and back between its correlative extremes. Often successive vibrations occur before the popular faith gravitates to the exact truth and rests there. Indeed, exact truth, rounded with astronomical precision, without an excrescence or a bulge anywhere, is never realized in popular thought on a subject vital to the world's progress. Approximations to the perfect crystal globe are all that our mental laboratory achieves.

This vibratory phenomenon has been amply illustrated in the history of religious beliefs. For instance, to our logic, the unity of God seems inevitable. But the world did not make assured conquest of it till after the popular reason had swung loose and often between faith in gods innumerable, and faith in no God at all. Hebrew faith, even with the aid of divine illumination and angelic auxiliaries and miraculous theophanies, did not rest in monotheism, till, after many oscilla-

tions, it had been forced back from the ethnic mythologies by servitude under pagan despotism. Till then, its history is a succession of lapses and reforms and relapses and recoveries. It covers centuries with wrecks of faith and retributive catastrophes.

The spiritual idea of Christ came to its maturity in a similar way. It did not get possession, even of the chosen twelve, until the crucifixion before their very eyes wrenched out of them the notion of an Oriental monarchy and a golden age. Masters in Israel were ignorant of the first principles of a spiritual kingdom. They sought in the twilight to solve the doubts in which their minds swung back and forth, between the letter and the spirit of prophecy. It should seem that men are not competent to become the pioneers of a great spiritual idea, till they have themselves in some sort lived through the opposite error. We know nothing but our experience.

Turning to the practical working of Christianity, we observe there the same phenomenon of oscillatory progress. Is salvation by the heart's faith, or by the vigil and the scourge? The way to heaven hung suspended for ages, like Mahomet's bridge in mid-air, between the antipodes of faith and works. The history of those centuries of twilight discloses a surging sea of mingled doubt and superstition, on which honest inquiry was "driven by the winds and tossed." Comparatively few found anchorage in the truth. They

were driven to its discovery by the monstrosities which burrowed in the monasteries of Europe, and flaunted their vileness in open day at Rome. John of Goch, John of Wesel, John Wessel, John Huss, John Wickliffe, — five of the saintly name, — represent a goodly succession of men, who, together with fraternities of believers like “The Brethren of the Common Lot,” were impelled into a truer faith and a purer life by the putrescence of false and unclean things around them. But half a century must elapse after the latest of the five before Luther could command the world’s hearing.

Suppose that the demoralization of the age had been but half so stupendous as it was. What would have been the sequel? No Luther and no reform. Half-grown evils do not compel revolutions. They create, not Luthers, but such men as Erasmus. His principle respecting the degeneracy of the times was, “Evils which men can not remedy they must look at through their fingers.”

—To compel the growth of thoroughbred reformers, error must have time to come to a head. It must ulcerate. In the divine economy, the *detective* feature is never suspended. Evil must declare itself by acting out its character to the full before it dies. Hence came the revolting extreme of Tetzel’s mission to Germany, so insolent to the common sense, and so offensive to the indignant conscience of men. A Christian missionary must become a “spiritual hawker,” as Froude calls him, whose business was to sell “passports to the easi-

est places in purgatory." That created the new faith by enforced re-action. Without such detection of wrong at its worst, Luther would not have risen to his full stature, and stood erect, a free man, when half-way down the steps of Pilate's staircase. He would have toiled on cringing knees to the bottom. He would have earned his thousand years of release from purgatory, and gone back to his cell at Erfurt, a shaven monk, to tell his beads, and patter Latin prayers to the end of his days.

In some things the extreme begat an extreme. Luther and his compeers swung loose from some truths. An iconoclastic faith is rarely an eclectic and well-balanced faith. The destructive force is not commonly the rebuilding force. In the vision of St. John, the angels who were commissioned to devastate sea and land did that and nothing else. They bore in their hands nothing but the golden vials of the wrath of God. Moral revolutions tend to the same insulation of service. The men who pull down are not the men who build up, and with the evil some good is left in ruins. So it was with the work of the reformers: the destructive force was in the ascendant.

Perhaps the most splendid illustration of the vibratory principle in modern Christian history is the recoil from monastic seclusion to the daring activity of Christian missions. It is doubtful whether this self-diffusive type of Christianity could have come into being when it did, but for

the self-centered type which preceded it. The theory of the world's conversion is intrinsically one of the most startling of historic ideas. It is no wonder, that when Alexander Duff first broached the project of missions to India, before the reverend Assembly of the Kirk of Scotland, he was received by good and able men, even men of large foreseeing vision, with a pause of incredulous silence. It is no wonder, that, when a few humble students of theology from the hills of Berkshire begged of the General Association of Massachusetts to send them on a mission somewhere to the heathen, the wisest men present shook their heads in doubt whether the public sentiment of the churches would bear so novel and hopeless an adventure. No wonder is it, that the classic mind of Edward Everett derided the enterprise in strains of silver eloquence.

*It was a wild idea. Is it not to this day the most original idea in history? Some secret power must have projected it into human thought. What was that power? It was the Spirit of God, using to his own purposes the inevitable recoil of regenerate mind from the extreme of monastic individualism. The nature of things forbade that immense bodies of men, inspired by the power of an endless life, should either stagnate or ferment in the faith of the cloister for ever.*

Relics of that faith filled Protestant Christendom in the form of an intense selfhood in religious life. The theory of salvation appeared to be, "Every

man for himself." The electric elements of Christian theology had no outlet in any large-hearted, Christ-like action proportioned to their expansive power. They were pent up in the cells of individual being. They were like a spiral spring coiled up and riveted. Believers were still breathing a cloistral atmosphere. They were hermits in their religious tastes. The chief business of their religion was self-examination. That duty was more frequently than any other one inculcated by the pulpit. Christians lived with finger ever on the spiritual pulse. Men and women of unusual devoutness, who now would be district missionaries, then wrote diaries of their fluctuating moods. They wrote marvelous stories of their conflicts with the Devil. Meetings for religious conference were largely given to narratives of their "experience."

It was not in the nature of things that that style of Christian living should be prolonged without variation beyond the time when the Christian mind found it out. Men must find out both the good and the evil of it. Good men must live it through till they learned it by heart. Then the re-action to something more self-forgetful and adventurous was inevitable. What form could that re-action take more natural than the magnificent development of Christian missions? A missionary map of the world was the new symbol of Christianity which was sure to come. The swing of the pendulum was to be reversed.

It has become a commonplace, now, that ours is the age of missions. Philanthropic activity has reached a commanding altitude of success. The world no longer laughs at it. Silvern orators no longer entertain gentle and perfumed hearers with predictions of its failure. It has no occasion now to ask for the world's respect: it commands the world's admiration. But what is the sequence?

Is it not that signs are beginning to appear that this, too, must undergo revision? Perils are looming up on the not distant horizon, which are the natural product of an age of vigilant and inventive expansion. We are lapsing into an unthoughtful style of religious life. The meditative graces seem to be waning. Christian work takes precedence of Christian reflection. A man is estimated by what he gives rather than by what he is. Wealth is assuming an undue importance in the worth of individuals and of churches. Gold is morally, as well as by troy weight, a heavy metal. The outlook is ominous, when, in any large fraternity of believers, the leaders take their leadership by right of property rather than by right of mind. It is never so in heroic ages. Then the right to lead depends on the force of character, which creates the power to lead. We need to learn by heart Sir William Hamilton's aphorism, "There is nothing great in this world but man, and nothing great in man but mind."

From such a condition of things, one peril often comes without premonition. It is a break, one or

many, in the solidity of that groundwork of belief which must always underlie permanent growth. Great action must be built on great thought. Breadth of expansion must be grounded in profound beliefs. Diffusive force must spring from concentrated character. A man can *do* only to the limit of what he *is*. Beyond that, all is makeshift. Are not these underground foundations loosening?

In other words, do not the signs of our times indicate that this busy, mercurial style of Christian activity needs to be *weighted* with more consolidated thinking? Central doctrines of our faith seem to be jostled out of place underneath. Though not sunk out of sight, they lie loose and inert. They can support none but a rickety superstructure. The structure we are building leans out of plumb, like the Tower of Pisa. It is not their fault, but their misfortune rather, that our laity, on whom we rely for leadership in Christian enterprise, no longer hold the independent convictions which their fathers had, the fruit of their own theological reading and reflections. Said one of them at a juncture of affairs at which his official position called for an opinion of a doctrine in theology, "The clergy must take care of that: I go with the majority." Did he not represent the attitude of multitudes of intelligent and earnest laymen? Yet, in the present drift of the age, what other attitude can they hold?

The problem is not of easy solution. Yet this

attitude of dependent faith, in which a man stands erect only when wedged in a crowd, is fraught with immense peril. An inherited belief, flanked on all sides by the forces of stimulant and daring inquiry, *invites* doubt. The doctrinal beliefs of clergymen are always open to the suspicion of professional narrowness. Under such conditions the ancestral faith of laymen seems made for skepticism to sport with. Many minds thus situated are preparing, when temptation crowds hard, to doubt every thing but the theorems of Euclid. Errors floating in the atmosphere may captivate the most enterprising minds, and drift them nobody knows where, unless a more thoughtful piety is superadded to that of this philanthropic and grand, but hurried and distracting, missionary business.

We all need the constructive and tonic influences of solitude. So much solitude, so much character. We specially need a new infusion of theological thinking among the leaders of our laity. We need a class of laymen who will take time to think out for themselves the fundamentals of the faith they profess. Few they might be in numbers, but an unconscious aristocracy in power over popular thought. Without some such auxiliaries to the clergy to steady the popular faith, and to act as conductors of electric thinking from the pulpit to the pew, we may by and by find our churches quaking in secret at phantoms of doubt, which they dare not speak of, and yet can not get

rid of. This is the peril of a “missionary age” which is that and nothing more. Worst relapses follow most splendid advances. Best things are susceptible of most fatal perversions. Does not the pendulum now need the touch of an unseen hand?

But we need not quake nor croak with pessimistic fears. The Tower of Pisa leans a long while without toppling over. While the Church remains in her formative age, the *look* of her condition will be that of transitional movement. Much of her vitality will go to rectifying abuses, repressing inordinate tastes, and re-adjusting mistaken or exaggerated beliefs. Opinion will traverse wide spaces from extreme to extreme. The movement will often resemble the ponderous swing of the pendulum of an astronomical clock of huge dimensions. Her character will seem to consist of tendencies rather than of fixed qualities and consolidated principles. These tendencies will be variable, now to one extreme, then to its antipodes. The popular faith may never appear to repose securely at the one spot at which lies the exact and balanced truth.

Yet, such a look of things should quicken the courage of thinking men. It is cheering to know that no extreme has the inheritance of longevity. Error does not belong to a long-lived species. It carries in its bosom a momentum towards decay. Its doom is to die in the process of the popular recoil to its opposite. Every transition from end

to end may bring popular thought under a more potent magnetism from absolute truth. Truth, pure and simple, is the resultant of intemperate advances and indignant rebounds. Only by such oscillatory progress does the popular mind seem able to achieve final and complete mastery of great ideas. But, so sure as the pendulum is to find its point of rest, as sure is the collective belief in matters of great moment for ever to approximate the point of pure truth, without excess and without deficit. Grand advances towards this may be achieved by one generation. It needs only the leadership of devout thinkers, inspired of God, to be its pioneers.

## V.

### OSCILLATIONS OF FAITH IN FUTURE RETRIBUTION.

THE dynamic principle of the pendulum was applied in a former essay to illustrate certain phenomena in Christian history. It has a hopeful bearing upon the present drift of opinion respecting endless punishment.

Candid believers will concede that the time has been when this doctrine was held in harsh and repellent outlines. It has put on the look of hideous malformations in nature. Its contorted features have sometimes alternated between the horrible and the grotesque. Biblical emblems of perdition have been interpreted to the letter. The fire, the lake, the brimstone, the worm, the smoke of torment, the physiological signs of speechless anguish, have been made to appear, not only as realities, but as visible and tangible realities. The doomed have been pictured in the full panoply of flesh and blood, with the nerve-centers alive to agony, plunged beneath waves of lambent flame. Dante paints one of the circles of the "Inferno" as the abode of men who are so inclosed in glowing fires, that, when they speak, it appears as if

the very flames were human tongues endowed with human voices. Our own Spenser represents Pilate submerged in the sea of fire, and lifting his wringing hands above the surface. The literatures of many languages and centuries have thus treated the retributive symbols of the Scriptures.

Our tastes do not refuse this license to poets, but when preachers indulge in the same dramatic liberty we rebel. Yet the literature of the retributive sentiment, aside from that of the pulpit, offers to the pulpit almost no other model than this of grossly materialized conceptions. It is not strange, therefore, that such discourse lives in the pulpit of our own day. Some passages in "Spurgeon's Sermons" contain this shocking and disgusting literalism.

Practiced preachers well know that it is less difficult to preach severely after a fashion than to preach tenderly in a manly fashion. Painful impressions of any kind are a more facile theme for discourse than the winning and the graceful. The bees that dropped honey on the lips of Plato have not swarmed on the homesteads of many of us. Nor is the distinction limited to facility in speech: it appears in other arts as well. Why is it that of the visitors to the galleries of Italy, nine out of ten will pause longer before the "Dying Gladiator" than before the matchless Apollo? Why do they remember longer the statue of "Laocoön" than that of the "Venus de Medici"? Even the

dog Cerberus is recalled in after-years more vividly than the bust of Julius Cæsar.

Quite in the natural course of things, therefore, preachers have dwelt upon retributive truth disproportionately, as well as intemperately. Uneducated preachers have discoursed upon it savagely. Field-preachers have vociferated it with an impassioned intensity, and with grotesque accompaniments of style and elocution. The tempestuous successes of one season of evangelistic labor have sometimes required years of pastoral toil to undo them. He is a great man who can preach well on any thing, but of great preachers he is the greatest who can preach well on “the wrath of the Lamb.”

The fact deserves mention also, that Christian art has had a subtle but potent influence in infusing inhumanity into the *animus* of the pulpit. “The Last Judgment,” by Michael Angelo, has impressed upon the imagination of the civilized world its marvelous expression of the physical contortions of retributive pain. Unconsciously the pulpit has transferred it to discourses on the same theme. The influence of other causes has been thus augmented in giving a tinge of materialism to the conception of penal justice. Men who have never seen the painting, have preached under an indirect inspiration from it, and others like it. It is not fanciful to doubt whether the celebrated sermon by President Edwards, which so appalled his audience at Enfield, would have contained its fiery

imagery if there had been no Michael Angelo, and no paintings of the last judgment.

The drama also has exerted a more obvious influence to the same effect. The preaching of punitive justice has been demoralized by the taste for stage-passion. The reflection of the metropolitan and the itinerant theaters of England is very perceptible in the sermons of John Knox and Bishop Latimer. The retributive preaching of some of their inferior contemporaries received from that source an almost malign ferocity. Many things have thus conspired to emphasize the comminatory doctrines of our faith. They have often made the pulpit a throne of judgment. Fellow-sinners with their hearers have preached like avenging angels.

If space would permit, it would be a deeply interesting study to note the influence of popular profaneness, in interpreting into the language of the pulpit the materialized uses of biblical symbols of retribution in their grossest and most repulsive form. Many hearers, by force of their own depravity, hear in the most innocent dialect of the pulpit the ideas in which they are accustomed to swear. Such hearers, and by unconscious sympathy other hearers, often see the retributive visions of the pulpit through this distorting lens of profaneness in popular speech.

From such materialism in both the pulpit and the pew, however it was created, a re-action was sure to come. Never does the composite nature of the human mind assert its claims more impera-

tively than when it has been assailed, long and without rest, by motives of a somber cast, in which the chief element is fear. The tendency is to either an intemperate outbreak of religious *furor*, or an equally intemperate recoil. But for some such convulsive relief, the end would be an epidemic of insanity.

Such was often the incipient drift of things under the preaching of retribution which has been here described. In sporadic cases, under the preaching of Whitefield and Wesley, it produced hysteria and catalepsy. But the great bulk of the common mind never takes the way to the insane-asylum. On that mind, the effect was to generate an exasperated antipathy to retributive ideas. This co-operating with causes outside of the pulpit has wrought out an intemperate rebound to the opposite extreme. Now retributive truth in any form rouses defiance rather than fear. The pendulum has swung clear over to the opposite end of the arc.

The signs of this re-action are patent. Mark the relaxation of public sentiment upon the whole circle of truths cognate with penal justice. What else is punishment now than the reform of the criminal? Who ever emphasizes its penal force as an expression of moral indignation? Penal justice among us is capricious in its judgments, and spasmodic in its execution. Thinking men are beginning to question whether any tribunal can be safely trusted with the power of pardon.

The same decline is more obvious in popular notions of divine benevolence. In the biblical ideal, benevolence in God or man is an athletic virtue. It rules a moral universe with stout emphasis on moral principles. Does this robust element live now in the popular notion of it? Where? Is it not so thoroughly eliminated, that retribution and benevolence have become antipathetic ideas? They are things to be "reconciled" by adroit casuistry. The one must be "vindicated" before the other can be trusted. The popular notion of the divine government, therefore, is an asthenic non-descript, which would subject any human administration to contempt. It is love without rectitude, and law without penalties. Atheistic nihilism can go no farther. Such is the drift of the popular theology. It assumes that there *can* be no endless pains for endless guilt, because the love of God can not endure either. Scripture or no Scripture, this is claimed to be the intuition of the human mind, and its decree is final.

Is not the pulpit also sliding down the slope of the popular tastes in this thing? It becomes me to inquire rather than to judge. Are not many preachers preaching upon the benign aspects of God's character, disproportionately and effeminate? Does not an ominous silence reign upon the sanctions of God's law? Some months ago a comminatory sermon appeared in "The Congregationalist" from the pen of Rev. Dr. Channing. Did not its stern fidelity strike even its orthodox

readers with surprise? Is not *that* style of preaching obsolescent in many representative pulpits?

Now and then an exceptional evidence of moral relaxation startles us. Mormonism astounds the nation and the age by the shock it gives to the moral sense of the world. What, then, is the meaning of the suggestion from a Christian pulpit of well-known fame, that that hideous mass of putrescent depravity must be handled with silken gloves, lest the suppression of crime by penal severity should make somebody unhappy? Has it come to this, that a defiant hierarchy of brothels must be welcomed to the fraternity of Christian States, trusting to the amorous cooing of politicians and preachers, to win the "erring sisters" back to virtue?

We seem to have fallen under the reign of turtle-doves. The time of the singing of birds has come. The atmosphere grows heavy with voluptuous perfumes. Is this a sporadic case of eccentric morals? or is it a straw which shows that a tainted and pestilent wind is blowing over the land? The most threatening factor in the Mormon problem is the effeminacy of public sentiment among our own people respecting the retributive repression of crime. We coddle it when we ought to crush it. Thomas Carlyle was an extremist, but he said some very necessary truths to a morally hysterical generation.

What, then, should be the policy of the pulpit? Shall we concede that the ancient faith is mori-

bund, and adjust ourselves as best we can to its doom? Not yet! Not quite yet! This faith has a great history. Its archives are full of great conquests. Let us possess our souls in patience, and expect another swing of the pendulum: it is sure to come. The thing which has been will be, as surely as gravitation will bring back the evening and the morning stars.

When Rev. Dr. Lyman Beecher was arraigned for heresy by the Synod of Cincinnati, one of the charges in the indictment was, that he had ignored in his preaching the ancient doctrine of divine sovereignty. He defended his pulpit by saying substantially this: "When I was ordained, I found that the doctrine of God's sovereignty had been overworked. It had been preached so exclusively, and in such extremes of statement, that the correlative doctrine of human responsibility had got knocked out from under; and I thought it my duty to put it back into its place. This has been the gist of my heresy."

The venerable father spoke good theology and good sense. So in these times of *partial decadence*, we need to study the popular affinities in respect to those things in which the balance of truth is disturbed. Then, the pulpit should throw its heaviest weights into the scale which is in danger of kicking the beam. If a central biblical truth like this of endless punishment has "got knocked out from under," the first business of the pulpit should be to "put it back."

Let, then, the bland and winning aspects of the gospel be presented in more even balance with the sterner truths which lie over against them. Discourse more frequently on the unutterable guilt of sin. Uncover the sunless abysses into which sin gravitates by its own weight of evil. Supplant the sensuous by the spiritual conception of the “second death.” Emphasize the identity of guilt and damnation in the ultimate experience of sin. Be as wise as Milton’s Satan in the discovery that conscious guilt is hell. Declare the reality and perpetuity of the world of despair, and the appalling doom of consignment to a demonized society. Teach the necessity of that doom to matured guilt, because of its demonized character and its own supreme choice of supreme evil. Let these truths be re-enforced by discourses upon the ineffable holiness of God, the intensity of His indignation towards wrong, the intrinsic excellence and serene beauty of the retributive sentiment in the divine mind.

These and cognate principles should be, *for a time*, the emphasized message of the pulpit. Let it be intensified by a refined and wary fidelity in the use of the biblical emblems of perdition. With what Milton calls “heartstruck” convictions, revive the use of the words which the lips of our Lord have hallowed for all time. Keep them clear of unscriptural elaborations. Reveal the weight of spiritual significance which they carry. Preach them tenderly. Preach them as a

fellow-sinner with the most guilty of the lost. But preach them so that they shall seem to *mean something*.

Why should we take from unbelievers the horoscope of our faith? Why accept their too-willing augury that it *is* moribund? We are of an ancient and lofty lineage. We have our own traditions. Let us honor them. If this doctrine of our sacred books is doomed, the whole system of which it is a fragment is doomed. The concession is a case of dynamite stowed under the fort we are defending.

I have seen the statement, that, in the manufacture of porcelain, there is a process by which a globular ball may be constructed of such exquisite delicacy of material, and with such refinement of art, that, if so much as a scratch be inflicted on its surface, the whole flies into a thousand atoms. Similar is the structure of God's moral government. All through it, from center to circumference, He has wrought His own infinite sensibility to the antagonism between right and wrong. To His thought, nothing else in the universe is so ineffably sacred. If He permits one iota of it to be dishonored, the whole falls into moral chaos.

Therefore we claim that this doctrine of a *retribution, commensurate with guilt in degree and in duration*, can not die out of human faith. It is one of those truths which Wordsworth calls "truths that wake to perish never." Though it is the doctrine of the Book, yet we do not depend for it on the Book alone. We depend on the nature of the

mind of God for its groundwork ; on the moral forces of the universe for its auxiliaries ; on every prophetic menace of a human conscience for its confirmation ; on the moral sense of every new-born child for proof that it *will* come direct and fresh from God, to the end of time ; and on the analogies of human law for assurance that moral government can exist nowhere without its majestic and imperative working. The religious beliefs of mankind never can break loose from such underground anchorage, in the nature of things. That is a very sure thing in the destiny of one world, which has the moral gravitation of all worlds flanking it on every side to hold it in position. A moribund theology ! Is the north star moribund ?

## VI.

### RETRIBUTION IN ITS BIBLICAL ATMOSPHERE.

THE thought has become a familiar one, that every man has an *atmosphere* which he carries with him, as the earth's globe carries its ambient ether. Through this inaudible and invisible envelope, a man makes his individuality felt. It goes out to the cognizance of other men without words of his. A bad man bears about him a tainted atmosphere, the odor of which reveals his secret vileness. His words may be lies, yet no one is deceived. They come back to him, as dreams are said to do, in contraries. An ancient legend tells of a false echo, which contradicted every voice that broke the stillness of the valley. So does a bad man's atmosphere belie his soft, wily speech.

So a good man has an atmosphere of integrity. It telegraphs his secret life when he knows not of it. It publishes to all observers his unconscious virtues. It has been said that all true biography is autobiography. It is only what a man tells of himself that comes to be known and believed. To this should be added, that the most truthful of all autobiography is that which a man tells of himself unconsciously. A silent chronicler is always at

the shoulder of a good man to record his involuntary graces. At the final judgment good men appear as good Samaritans unawares. "When saw we Thee in prison, and came unto Thee?" In like manner, a man of abounding force, good or bad, carries an atmosphere weighted with power. Wherever he is, the atmosphere is surcharged with electricity. When he moves, men feel his movement as they do the wind of a cannon-ball. Colossal men do not know their own size.

Similar to this psychological phenomenon is a certain accompaniment which we may aptly term their atmosphere, which we find enveloping great central truths as they appear in the Scriptures. Many things enter into its composition, but chiefly the character of the man who proclaims a truth, and the spirit with which it seems to impregnate his own mind. Often the man is the message more than his words. His quickened sensibilities are the revelation. What he is, discloses the meaning of what he says. The interpretation of his words which is most consonant with the animus of the man, is most probably the true one. Even his silences often put life into his utterances. What he does not say has capital significance. The Word of God gives out no false echo.

1. It is instructive, therefore, as a help to our conception of the idea of *retribution*, to observe how it *looks* through its biblical atmosphere. And in the first place, what is the look of it as it appears in the historic records of the Old Testament?

The first thing that strikes the reader as significant, is that the principle of retributive justice is made to pervade the whole history by means of signal and appalling examples. It is acted rather than defined, painted rather than said. So far as the character of the divine government is there disclosed, the impression is made with ineffaceable distinctness, that sin and suffering are inseparable. Law in the natural world is more uniform, but not a whit more distinct in the infliction of pain on the transgressor than the law of the moral world is, as represented in certain phenomenal events which mark epochs in biblical history. These occur with sufficient frequency to act as *memorials* of God as a righteous governor who will by no means clear the guilty. The moral impression to this effect is even more vivid for their occasional occurrence. They seem to emanate from the secret reserves of a force whose limitations no man can define, and whose disclosures no man can foresee. God comes out for the moment from the seclusion in which commonly His power hides itself, and strikes a blow, the echo of which reverberates through ages. Nations quake at the sound. It lives for ever in the world's memory.

When we come to note the animus of the writer who puts the facts on record, we observe further, that he tells the story with the most absolute equanimity. Although his mission is to declare that "it shall come to pass that the ears of every one that heareth shall tingle," yet he is not shocked

or offended by the severity of the inflictions. He does not stand aghast at penal suffering as an unnatural phenomenon. He sees nothing in it inhuman or malevolent. He does not treat it as an interpolation which disturbs the moral equipoise of events, by introducing a strange element which needs to be explained. Not a syllable is recorded in apology for it, or in defense of God's government. Nothing in the bearing of the historian suggests that the facts need explanation or apology. Penalty under given conditions is treated as the most natural thing to happen. The probabilities of history demand it. Nothing else fits into the becoming sequence of events. The absence of it would be a vacuum of mystery to be explained. Not suffering, but sin, is the inexplicable phenomenon. The lapse of man into its bottomless abysses is the appalling tragedy.

We note especially *four* great catastrophic illustrations of the retributive element in the divine government which made profound impression on Hebrew character. They are the Noachian Deluge, the volcanic destruction of the "Cities of the Plain," the miraculous burial of the Egyptian army in the Red Sea, and the extermination of the aboriginal tribes of Canaan. These facts we find recorded with the calm dignity of history. They are embedded in the national annals of the Hebrews as symbols of the character of the God they worshiped. They stand in their sacred writings as memorials of the faith of their fathers,

which they in turn are to teach to their children. Not so much as a mark of interrogation appears in question of their rectitude; not a syllable in vindication of divine benevolence. The writer never has the bearing of a defendant or an apologist. He records the astounding tragedies with no more defensive comment than he gives to the story of Moses in the bulrushes, or that of Joseph in the well at Shechem. Children reading the volume consecutively are sensible of no shuddering or recoil on the part of the writer in its retributive pages.

The tragic narratives are intrinsically natural. That a world wallowing in the filth of moral putridity should be indignantly buried from the offended eye of the universe by avenging waters; that cities steeped in vices to which language could give no other name than theirs should be swept off the face of the earth by a storm of fire; that Nature herself should suspend the operation of her laws, that the oppressor of God's people, the representative of a tyranny of four hundred years, might be engulfed in the sea; that idolatrous races whose stock was already caving in, in their corruption, should be crowded to their doom to make way for more virile blood and a nascent theocracy,—all these things occur in the inevitable course of nature, and as such they are recorded. They are monumental tokens of God's righteousness. The doomed ones were monuments of guilt: they must be made monuments of retribution. As such

they must go into the world's history, and abide there for ever. This is the story and the whole of it.

When a traveler wanders over the excavated ruins of Pompeii, and notes the evidences of the moral corruption of the generation entombed there, he feels that it was well to bury such a depraved civilization from the sight of men. Science may say what it will of nature's law in the catastrophe. He reads there a profounder statute than any of nature's teaching. It declares eternal justice in the ruin around him. Something in his own being responds to it as a decree of God. He tells the story to his children without misgiving. He knows that to the moral sense of childhood it will speak for itself. It needs no apology or defense. He says, "Here men offended a holy God by their putrid vices, and here He laid His iron hand upon them in retribution."

So it is that the Hebrew historian records the retributive catastrophes of the ancient world. He declares them with the same equipoise of feeling with which he pictures in backward prophecy the six days of creation. To these as to those he might fitly have appended the *finale*, "And God saw that it was good!" It is left to later times to raise tangled questions in the ethics of the story, and to pile up volumes of apologetic criticism. Not a word of this seems to have occurred to the contemporaries looking on, or to the annalist rehearsing the tragic history. The ancient wisdom

saw no mystery which needed solution. For the ancient ethics it was enough that retribution was visited on guilt. Why should it not be so? What else could be in its place? Penal justice was right; right was ultimate. Hebrew philosophy held her peace. The author of Ecclesiastes indulges in a great deal of skeptical comment on the vicissitudes of human life, but has not one word to say in doubt of the rectitude of these monumental records of God's justice in the sacred books of his countrymen. Those he seems to have accepted in believing silence. He saw nothing in them to swell the volume of skeptical inquiry. Such was the silent verdict of Hebrew philosophy.

But Hebrew *piety* was not content with acquiescent silence. It gave to the retributive decrees an approval vocal with praise. Prophets foresaw them with complacency. The people exulted in them at their national festivals. The popular songs rehearsed them in the temple-worship. Inspired poets poured forth imprecatory hymns without stint, and the people chanted them with accompaniment of lyre and dance. God's enemies were their enemies. They appeased their own retributive instincts in celebrating the retributive achievements of Jehovah.

Such is the atmosphere in which the idea of retribution appears in the Hebrew Scriptures. Not that we find there no other than retributive memorials of God. They are full of foretokens of His redeeming purposes. Retributive records form but

a fragment of the whole. But alternating now and then with promises and blessing, appear these terrific disclosures and mementos of avenging law. Through the lunar radiance of redemptive grace runs this line of lurid red.

There can be no question how the ancient faith received the record as a whole. Devout men made no election of part above part. They rejoiced in the story of punitive justice as cordially as in that of Messianic promise. They sang the one hundred and ninth Psalm, heaping imprecations upon the enemies of Judah, as heartily as the twenty-fourth, opening the gates to the King of Glory. The man of Hebrew lineage who should have looked on the lyric poetry of his people with repugnance because of its imprecatory songs, would have been false to his ancestral blood.

2. Pass on now to the personal teachings of our Lord. What is the look of the retributive sentiment as it appears there? We are now in a new world. Another hour has struck: it is the meridian hour. The world's thought is at its best. Preparatory ages have brought all nations to an epoch of transcendent progress. New ideas are dawning. New institutions are struggling to the birth. New truths are ripening in minds which are one day to sway the advanced thinking of the world. We might plausibly ask, in the way of hypothesis, is not the retributive feature of the divine government among the old things which have passed away? Is it not a fragment of the

theological *débris* which the world has outlived? Shall we not look for it in the gulf of revolution which separates the modern from the ancient faith? We look back on dismantled cities, and disintegrated empires, and enslaved nations, and exterminated tribes, and dead races, and a depopulated world; and we might plausibly ask, Is not *that* scroll of history rolled up, and deposited in antiquarian libraries, for ever? Is it not time for the *ingenious* benevolence of God to express itself in the invention of some more amiable policy of administration than that by which retributive justice has held the rod of iron over the past? May not an awe-struck and trembling world hope for this?

Almost the first page of our Lord's discourses gives the answer. We find no such innovation borne on the atmosphere of the new world. We do indeed find new disclosures of the benevolence of God. We discover an innovation of redemptive wisdom which lights up and interprets all the past. But it is not such as to do away with the old elemental idea of retribution upon *incorrigible* guilt. On the contrary, because of it that idea is re-enforced and intensified. The furnace is heated seven times more than it was wont to be heated. A design is obvious to forestall and forbid the abrogation of retributive decree in deference to the birth of Christian liberty. The very frontispiece of our Lord's instructions is, "I am not come to destroy the Law." His words emphasize the declaration.

Heretofore retributive threatenings have dealt chiefly with temporal pains. Their outlook into eternity has been shadowy and uncertain. Now that immortality looms up in human destiny, the punishment of guilt rises and expands in lurid accompaniment. A world is discovered, in which undying guilt is hedged in and weighed down with undying woes. Literal utterance can not compass it. Therefore emblems the most appalling that human sense can realize to the imagination are invented to paint it. A more intense thought of retribution than was ever conceived by comminatory prophet or avenging angel, is thrown out into the theology of the future. That is God's *ultimate* idea in His dealing with incorrigible guilt.

In this climax of revelation on the subject, retribution is localized: it receives the definiteness of *place*. Hell henceforth appears in the map of the universe. A world wrapped in billows of flame, and nauseous with the fumes of burning sulphur, becomes the symbol of retributive pain. It passes into the literatures of nations. Dante and Milton write poems upon it which men will not let die. Genius numbers and classifies its crowded population. It pervades the dominant religion of the world. It dwells as a thing real and familiar in the thoughts of every-day life. The depravity of men makes its name a household word in the dialect of profane speech. Its murky atmosphere hangs over deathbeds. No nation or tribe of ancient times possessed in their religion or their lit-

erature so intense and fearful a conception of the final abode of guilt as we have in the Christian revelation of an eternal Hell. And the teaching which has wrought out this terrific reduplication of the retributive idea in human thinking, has come from the lips of One who was God's supreme impersonation of love!

Let us inquire further how does the great Teacher Himself seem to regard His message in the handling of it? What atmosphere does His language and His personality throw around it? Does He dilute or minimize it? Does He give it a gloss of gentle words? Does He conceal it beneath hints and innuendoes. Does He apologize for it? Does He labor to vindicate it? Does He philosophize about its necessity? Does He dilate upon its intrinsic excellence? Does He even descend to prove it? Does He attempt to refute objections, and forestall the cavils of coming ages, against it? Does He betray by word or deed, or ingenuity of rhetorical art, the shadow of a cloud of doubt about it in His own mind, or of a suspicion that it may need proof or vindication?

Not a syllable of all this. Not a sign appears of any of those ingenious arts of speech by which men betray the consciousness of a weak cause or a doubtful dogma. He simply says the word which it is given Him to say. "As My Father hath taught Me, I speak these things." With the serenity of conscious Deity He pours out the fiery symbols of indignation against evil and of its

swift destruction, with no word of comment, or attempt to explain or qualify. He unrolls the scroll of Judgment on which is written in fire what He will *do* with the incorrigibly guilty, and leaves it there. Such is the atmosphere in which the teachings of our Lord envelop the idea of punitive justice, pure and simple. It is an atmosphere of *sovereignty*. Other elements of His message reveal other aspects of His character. But this threat of retribution to incorrigible guilt is the forecast of a righteous sovereign, just that and nothing less.

Our Lord's absolute unconsciousness of having in these terrific disclosures uttered any thing which a loyal conscience can recoil from, is sublime beyond the reach of words. In no other message from His lips is the majesty of His Godhead more luminous than in this.

3. Reserving for a separate essay, a review of the apostolic epistles, let us note the biblical aspect of the retributive idea as it appears in the pictorial visions of St. John.

We have here a glimpse which it is impossible to misunderstand of the retributive sentiment of Heaven. How, then, is the retributive element in God's administration regarded there? Two orders of intelligence, if no more, are there engaged in researches into the ways of God. If spiritual embodiment adds any thing to the conditions of human insight into divine mysteries, that improved vision is given to redeemed men there. If ages of

sinless study of the great problems of the universe add any thing to the means of their solution, angelic minds possess that advantage there. If the intermingling of the efforts of different orders of mind to penetrate the deep things of God, helps to clarify and balance judgment in the result, the conditions existing there must realize this advantage. It is not forbidden us to believe that all possible facilities for making ultimate and finished discoveries of truth must exist there.

There, if anywhere, then, we should expect to find the element of penal justice in the divine government outgrown. Are endless pains for endless guilt intrinsically antagonistic to the pure benevolence of God? and is the moral universe destined to discover this? Then, we should expect to find some hint of this in the advanced thinking of the redeemed. Does angelic foresight of God's ways detect the final expurgation of retributive devices from the divine government? Then, we should expect to receive some intimation of this in the scenic painting of angelic worship.

There is a spot in the heavens where a star once shone which has gone out in darkness. Astronomers mark a vacancy on the chart of the stellar universe where it once glistened. So we might reasonably believe, that, if the world of despair is ever to be blotted out of the government of God, the telescopic prevision of archangels would surely discover in anticipation the vacancy which is one day to be made by its disappearance. Should we

not, then, look for at least some distant and cautious hint of so stupendous a phenomenon in this picture of their liturgic service? What else could so profoundly move a devout universe to thanksgiving?

What do we find, in fact, in this revelation of St. John? Not a word, not a hint, not a syllable, not a significant silence even, from which the most dexterous, even crafty, exegesis can extort any such idea. Angelic and redeemed minds are in sympathy on this subject. They take up the problem where earthly research leaves it. They adopt the same conclusions, and continue the same adoration of the divine mystery, which devout men have acknowledged here. The public sentiment of Heaven is all one way. Retributive justice is the theme of song. The surging multitudes before the throne exult in it. It is not tolerated there as an evil incidental to a weak government. It is not accepted as a temporary device necessitated by undeveloped resources or inadequate power. It is not accepted as the anomaly of a mysterious interregnum in which the universe is left to the working of merciless law. It is not held in reserve as a thing to be endured in awe-struck silence, or told in secret and in whispers. But as a thing intrinsically grand and excellent, it is proclaimed aloud. On account of it, incense is offered in adoration. The endless duration of it is no offense to holy sensibilities. That, too, is a joy for ever. And this condition of things is a matter of

course. Does the inspired seer explain it? Not by a word. Does he reconcile it with the benevolence of God? Not by a syllable. Does he attempt to conceal divine agency in it, under cover of impersonal law? Not by a moment's silence. No argument is suggested in proof of it, no apology is offered for it, no hint is given that it is a weak spot in the divine economy which needs reinforcement. Something there surely is in this retributive idea as it is there conceived, which speaks for itself to beings whose ear is attuned to the mysterious disclosure. Something in it proclaims its intrinsic excellence. Some radiance from its interior glory illuminates the very heaven of heavens. The assembled hosts are a unit in its recognition. They lift up their voices as the sound of many waters. What is that something which so transforms and glorifies the punitive justice of Jehovah? It can be but one thing: *The retributive sentiment and the benevolent sentiment in the mind of God are one.* Justice and love in the ultimate analysis of moral ideas are the same. Love necessitates justice, and justice illustrates love. Thus and there the inspired seer leaves it.

Such is the atmosphere which the retributive idea carries with it from one end of the Scriptures to the other. In this review, one thing appears very certain. It is that our popular and inherited notion of the place which retribution holds in the divine government, and of the nature of the re-

tributive sentiment in holy minds, needs radical correctives to adjust it to the ideas which pervade the Word of God. Those ideas are repugnant to our modern tastes. One or the other must give way in a re-adjustment of the popular theology. We need the infusion of some element into our theological diathesis which shall tone up our faith in more profound likeness to that of patriarchs and apostles and our divine Lord. We need a change of temper like that which iron receives when it becomes steel. Some suggestions looking to such a re-adjustment are reserved for a subsequent essay.

## VII.

### ST. PAUL ON RETRIBUTION.

IN the construction of the Scriptures, inspiration was wise, we may reverently say adroit, in the selection of its human instruments. Each was fitted to his mission. The man and the juncture in the progress of revelation which he represented were correlative. At any epoch in the history of revelation, therefore, something may be learned of the forthcoming development of truth from the character of the man elected to execute it. What he was, will throw light on what he said. What intimations, then, did the election of St. Paul to inspired office give of the chapter which it was his mission to add to the accumulating volume of revelation?

It is something to the purpose to observe in reply that he was a man of large farseeing and foreseeing vision. He was superlatively a man of progress. He had broken away from a venerable faith. It had been sacred to him as the faith of an honored ancestry. A mind like his, alert with the spring of its transition from an old to a new theology, was prepared for any thing of the nature of an onward movement in religious

thought. He could not be wedded to the old because it was old, nor antipathetic to the new because it was new. If a supplementary chapter of eschatology was about to open in the growth of revelation, he was the man above all others to receive it into his own faith, and to ingraft it on the faith of the infant church.

Moreover, he was a man of profound sensibilities. He was not predisposed to ascetic teaching by the hardness of his own mental structure. His sympathetic nature was loyal to the humane side of truth. His mind was intellect and soul, blended in perhaps as healthy balance as is ever found in men of great force. Though an acute thinker, he was not a "thinking-machine," as President Edwards has been termed by his opponents. Though a predestinarian, and one who had the courage of his convictions, he was not a bigot, as predestinarians are often called, nor did he crowd his faith into a fatalistic theology, as predestinarians often do. He originated the elements of a theology to which Mr. Froude ascribes the profoundest thinking, and the most forceful reforms of modern times. Yet he was not the man to sacrifice, even to such a theology, the instincts of a large-hearted humanity.

Again, he had been elected to the supreme rank of inspired seers in extending the canon of revelation. He lived in a state of prophetic vision, he had looked upon the risen and ascended Christ, he had been caught up to the heaven of heavens.

In inspired trance he had made discoveries which his human tongue could not utter. His eye had been struck sightless by the overwhelming glory of the Lord in person. The memory of those visions was the atmosphere of his life. If, therefore, any new truth was on the eve of disclosure concerning the destiny of man and the eternal worlds, he was of all men the man to know it. He above all men was fitted to be its pioneer to the faith of the Church. Of all men living, the man to whom we should most naturally look for the discovery of an improved Christian theodicy, was St. Paul.

Further, we find that he *does* initiate a new era in the history of Christian thought. He is a discoverer, not merely a teacher of the ancient faith. His conversion formed an epoch. He was inspired to herald advances, even upon the teachings of our Lord. On central doctrines of our faith, he gives us advanced ideas: they are the fulfillment of ancient promise. The immortality of the soul, the resurrection of the body, the Deity of Christ, the significance of the Atonement, the spiritual import of the Jewish ritual, the person and mission of the Holy Ghost, are all taught by St. Paul, in more full and luminous disclosure than by any other inspired teacher. Truths upon which our Lord was reticent are taught by this elect apostle. Speaking in the dialect of modern controversy, St. Paul founded a new school of theological beliefs. Certain great ideas which form a compact and

welded system of faith, which has been the favorite of the more thoughtful minds in the Church for ages, we can not define more tersely than to call them the Pauline theology.

Now, in view of these preliminaries, we claim, that, if anywhere in the Word of God we should look to find a new revelation of eschatology, it is in these elaborate and original epistles of this chief of apostles. Was the time ever to come, for example, when a new interpretation of our Lord's teachings should be given to the world by divine authority? Was any appendix to them to be evolved by subsequent inspiration? Had they any occult significance which a later exegesis must read between the lines? Was any recondite principle of interpretation, like that of Swedenborg, to be invented, which should extort from them a hidden sense, even a sense contradictory to their obvious reading? Did the full and exact truth require any re-adjustment of their perspective, to be discerned by the profounder insight, or more scholarly criticism, of a coming age? Did they need any eclipse of their intensity, any obscuration of their fiery symbols, to make them true to the ethical instincts of more enlightened times?

The response we make to all such conceivable hypotheses is, that, *if so*, we should reasonably look for such supplementary revelations to the writings of this chief apostle of progress and reform. He was the man to know them, if they were true. He was the man to foresee them, if

they were approaching in the near or distant future. His was the mind to take them in, and appreciate them, if they were needful to round out the system of revealed truth. And he was the man of all men to launch them upon the faith of the Christian world.

Yet again, the conditions of his apostleship were unique. He was a Jew. He had been one of the most rigid believers of the most rigid sect of the Jewish Church, yet he had become the supreme apostle to the Greek and Roman world. From one extreme he had swung over to the other. His mission now was to win to the new religion men whose prepossessions were intensely antagonistic to Jewish traditions.

He had a delicate task before him, therefore, in his treatment of any thing for which Christianity was indebted to the Hebrew Scriptures. If they had transmitted to it a notion of retribution which was a relic of a semi-barbarous age, it would have been the part of wisdom to let it drop silently into oblivion. If that might not be, he had every inducement to moderate its severity, to strike off the edge of its appeal to enlightened consciences. Above all, he had good reason, if his apostolic liberty permitted it, to mitigate the intensity of the symbols of retribution set forth by the authority of One, who, to the classic Greek or Roman mind, was known only as the “crucified Jew.” In some way the apostle would have relieved the mordant pungency of the truth, if he could have done so

with fidelity to the Spirit that was in him. "They of Cæsar's household," some of them of refined culture and noble birth, would have heard from him a tranquil philosophic doctrine of retributive penalty which would have been *re-actionary* in its relation to that of the ancient Scriptures and of our Lord.

We now look to discover signs of these variations and improvements upon the earlier records. And what do we find? Is there a sentence, word, or syllable indicative of a re-actionary movement of the apostle's mind? We find the main drift of his teachings devoted to the truths needful for the organization of the infant church. His work is largely of the executive order: he builds foundations. The elemental doctrines of redemption are unfolded with a fullness and magnificence which make his writings a treasury of Christian thought through all time. Moreover, his instructions in the main are not comminatory: they are cheering and commendatory. Benedictions are thrown out in jets unexpectedly, showing that his mind is full of them. He enters joyously into the spirit of the new religion as a message of hope and gladness. Never is his discourse misanthropic or ascetic. His life is a soldier's march of conquest, and his anticipation of its close a song of triumph. And what his personal faith is, that also is the spirit of his ministry.

But what of the world of eternal loss, to which Christ had but a few years before given such ap-

palling vividness? What has this hopeful, progressive, exultant, triumphant apostle to say of it? We find that feature of our Saviour's teaching treated by St. Paul as men are wont to treat a truth which has reached its maturity, and is now full grown, and fixed beyond debate. He accepts it as serenely as our Lord delivered it. He adds nothing, abstracts nothing, changes nothing. He explains nothing, proves nothing, vindicates nothing. He handles it as a truth which has passed beyond the stage of apology or defense. It is embedded in the groundwork of his theology. He has now only to build upon it as a foundation, and to use it as a moral force in his practical instructions. It is he who says in the tone of assured faith, "Knowing the terrors of the Lord, we persuade men."

How is it that other men are accustomed to treat principles or facts which have crystallized in a system of general belief or of social order? They treat them chiefly by casual allusion: they put them to use in practical affairs, not pausing to prove or to defend them. In our jurisprudence, for instance, the principles most firmly rooted in civilized government find no statement in statute-books. They exist unwritten, as common law: they are recognized as authorities by courts and juries. Men build empires and republics upon them without once putting them into written speech. So, in ordinary life, usages and precedents which have the prestige of the common

consent, we do not constantly re-affirm and vindicate. We take them for granted. We speak of them allusively. Our discourse about them is fragmentary. We use them as things which nobody assails, because nobody denies. Nobody asks for proof, because nobody doubts.

Thus it is that St. Paul handles the retributive teachings of the elder Scriptures. He treats them mainly by allusion here and there. He assumes them, hints at them, gives a glimpse of them, and passes on. But never are they contradicted: never are they blinked or evaded. He does not ignore our Lord's most terrific symbol of them. He applies them to the demands of his case in hand with the same calmness of assurance with which Christ proclaimed them. No more here than there do we find apology or argument or reserve of truth. Never by a word, or by silence, or by speech askance, is the idea suggested of any possible misunderstanding of those symbols. He says nothing to arouse a suspicion that they may not mean what they seem to mean. Still less is any hint given of their retraction or displacement by later revelations, or their obsolescence through unfitness to later ages.

We find nothing, for example, in the apostle's theologic temper corresponding to that suspense of faith in which infirm believers search for some possible loophole of escape from the obvious meaning of our Lord's discourse. St. Paul is the synonym of courage. He is a man of positive ideas.

What he believes, he knows. His theology contains no half-truths. His words suggest no lurking doubts underneath. As on all other themes, so on this of retributive decrees, his deliverances are those of a believer who has no misgivings. The words, "know," "knowing," and their correlatives, are favorites in his vocabulary. More than one hundred times they occur, and generally in such connections that their force is intensive. So it is that positive men put their case, and so it is that this most positive of men puts the fact of retribution. "Knowing the terrors of the Lord," he says what it is given him to say.

Theologians may be classified as the men who believe, and the men who know. St. Paul belonged pre-eminently to the latter class. In the Koran, it is said that the word "assuredly" sometimes stands in the original as a sentence by itself. Mahomet, like all predestinarians, was an assured thinker. He had no doubts: he believed in his religion when he alone believed it. This is the style of mind which St. Paul represented. The tone of unqualified assurance runs through all his teachings on the subject of retribution.

We run the eye at random over the pages most dense with the Pauline theology, and we find in broadcast those allusive fragments of speech which form the boldest utterances of truth, because they are the words of a mind consolidated in its convictions, and at ease from doubts. We catch them in glimpses like these; viz., "The Lord Jesus re-

vealed in flaming fire." "Taking vengeance on them that know not God." "That all might be damned who believe not the truth." "Tribulation and anguish upon every soul that doeth evil." "Enemies of Christ whose end is destruction." "The wrath of God revealed from heaven." "Fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation." "A fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." "God is a consuming fire."

Such is the method chiefly of the Pauline records in handling the fact of retribution. By allusion here, and by partial statement there, and undoubting utterance everywhere, the apostle throws out retributive ideas as if they were a thing of course, and would carry their own authority. No more to him than to our Lord does it seem to occur that the appalling truth needs vindication, or that it will shock a loyal conscience. He uses it without reserve or cautious speech as a thing fixed and familiar in the beliefs of men. He uses it as men use the rainfalls and the tides. That men professing to believe in the inspiration of St. Paul, should, in the face of these records, believe also that endless retribution can not exist in the universe of God, or that it can not be inflicted for the sins of this life, is an astounding phenomenon in the history of religious faith. Even a doubt or a hypothetical belief on the subject by such a believer is a sign of an erratic mind.

For the sake of the contrast, let us, for the moment, make the Pauline theology on this theme

hypothetical. Let us contrive to relax the positiveness of the Pauline style of discussion in the glimpses it gives of retributive penalties. Put into it hints of the doubts and the half-beliefs and the hypotheses of suspended faith by which modern theology is often enervated. How do such fragmentary Scriptures as these read? viz., "*If* the Lord should be revealed in flaming fire." "*Perhaps* taking vengeance on them that know not God." "*Peradventure* that they might be damned who believe not." "Tribulation and anguish *may* come upon souls that do evil." "Enemies of Christ whose end *possibly* is destruction." "Vessels of wrath *probably* fitted for destruction." "If the wrath of God *should be* revealed from heaven." "*Who knows* but that God is a consuming fire?" "*We conjecture* that fearful looking for of judgment may remain." "*Suppose* that it be a fearful thing to fall into the hands of God." "*Suspecting* the terrors of the Lord."

Put an "if" before, and an "if" behind, and scatter "ifs" all through this Pauline theology, and how does it match what we know of the Pauline character? Has it the sound of apostolic suasion? Has it the ring of inspired speech? Who would ever be moved by it to fear the wrath of an offended God? Yet is it not a fair expression of the dubious and volatile faith with which many in our day are dallying with the stupendous verities of biblical retribution? Is it not the kind of inspired Scriptures required by that state of mind

in which men come to the Word of God prepossessed with the conviction that a retributive theology is not to be found there, must not be found there, because of the debilitated "ethical instincts" which can not bear a disclosure of the indignation of God against sin?

Fragmentary allusion and practical assumption, however, are not all that the Pauline theology advances concerning retributive truth. We find two distinct affirmations which have great significance in the framework of the retributive sentiment as it appears in apostolic thinking.

One is the positive declaration that life in this world without a knowledge of Christ constitutes an adequate probation,—adequate for the purposes of a fixed destiny in eternity. In the first chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, the chief premise, without which the argument amounts to nothing, is the sufficiency of the light of nature to give to the heathen conscience a knowledge of God. Then, it must be sufficient, and the apostle assumes this, to give an equitable moral trial. The whole force of that magnificent reasoning is invalid, except on the assumption that men ignorant of the Christian faith have an equitable trial. In the dialect of the world, they have a "fair chance." Even under the moral obliquities of hereditary paganism, man, so long as the stars glisten, and the sun rises, and the rivers flow, has that above and around him which proves to him a living God.

No example of pagan character could be a fairer

test of the question than that which St. Paul had before him in the Roman civilization. If that example could not test it, none could. Yet he gives his verdict with no intimation of a doubt or an exception. Man without Christ can know God. The proof is ample. The force of it is patent to his every sense. If he refuses to know God, he is without excuse. If he is incorrigible in that refusal, his damnation is just. The indignation of God is righteously displayed in his destruction. The apostle puts it in no sicken speech. "Is God unrighteous who taketh vengeance? God forbid!"

If the Pauline idea of retributive decrees had been purposely so developed as to forestall the modern objection to their infliction on men who have not known and rejected Christ, it could not have achieved that purpose more explicitly or conclusively. That punishment can not be justly inflicted on sinners outside of a Christocentric system of probation, certainly never entered the mind of the author of the Epistle to the Romans.

The other declaration, equally significant, is to the same purpose. It is that a knowledge of Christ aggravates the retributive experience of those who know and reject Him. That is to say, so far is it from being essential to the equity of moral trial that men must be put into the Christian range of belief and opportunity, that the working of such privilege, if abused, is to augment both guilt and penalty already incurred. The

Epistle to the Hebrews, whoever was its author, may be fairly taken as a representative of the Pauline theology. Its argument turns in part on this pivot: "Of how much *sorer* punishment shall he be thought worthy who hath trodden under foot the Son of God!"

Although the apostle is not contrasting here the light of nature and the light of revelation, yet he distinctly recognizes the principle that probation is a matter of *degrees*. This, in its bearing on the subject in hand, can mean but one thing. Christian birth and training do not *create* the probation to which man is subjected here. They intensify that probation. The rejection of the Christian offer of salvation does not create the doom of incorrigible guilt, nor is it essential to the justice of that doom. It *aggravates* both the guilt and its penal consequences.

Two distinct systems of moral trial are here going on. One is superinduced upon the other. The light of nature illuminates the one: the light of revelation illuminates the other. Each is complete in its way. Trial under either is perfect in its kind. Guilt under either is proportioned to its conditions. Punishment under either is graduated to guilt. Thus the Pauline conception of retributive inflictions comes into exact line with the teachings of the elder Scriptures and with the disclosures of our Lord. Starting from different points of departure, they all converge to one result; viz., that retribution commensurate with guilt in

degree and in duration is a law of the moral universe which the retributive sentiment in the mind of God requires. It is a law, therefore, to which minds loyal to God take no exception, and ascribe no wrong.

## VIII.

### CORRECTIVES OF THE POPULAR FAITH IN RETRIBUTION.

#### PART I.

THE biblical idea and the popular idea of retribution are wide apart. To assimilate the two, the popular idea needs certain corrective and tonic appliances, which, for the most part, are seldom thought of.

1. One is a more distinct recognition of the infirmity under which the human mind labors in forming a judgment of the retributive element in the government of God. Conscience once unbalanced by the overweight of wrong, tends to an underestimate of the wrong. It inclines to displacecy towards the whole working of moral government which condemns and punishes wrong. Conscience thus distorted is like the needle deflected by a disturbing magnet.

Such is the condition of the human mind in forming its ideas of retributive suffering. Man is not an impartial judge of God in this thing. We live under violated law. Our life is an interval of reprieve between sentence and execution. We

naturally feel repugnance to both, and to the law which demands them. Our instinct is to assume an attitude of glum resistance. This matures into defiance. We fling our concentrated and angered will against the will of God. The old couplet,—

“No man e'er felt the halter draw,  
With good opinion of the law,”

expresses in homely phrase the natural mood of man towards comminatory decrees. We underrate the evil of sin. We gloss it over with smooth vocabulary. We expurgate from our dialect the words most expressive of its enormity. We infold it in the contradictions of fatalistic philosophy. When nothing else will do, we laugh at it. A multitude of the facts and fancies on which the risible faculties of men disport themselves are vagaries of sin. Probably more than half of the monitions of awakened consciences are drowned in laughter. The laugh of guilt is as distinct from that of innocent amusement as that of insanity.

We calumniate the divine government of sin. We call penalty vengeance, and law tyranny. We disguise transgression into a shadow of virtue. This is a world of men and women in masks. Literature paints vice as force of character. Poetry makes heroes of vile men. When will the world decide upon Milton's Satan, whether to hate him, or to admire? In popular fiction, it is the dull men who pray: the geniuses drink hard and swear. Mother-wit is oftener profane than reverent. Phi-

losophy follows in the same track. It indulges in wire-drawn speculations upon the consistency of penal justice with benevolence, till the old, plain, homespun notion of guilt is “in wandering mazes lost.” Milton hinted at a profound truth when he remanded such speculations to the world of Pandemonium. In the ultimate issue, the whole idea of retributive inflictions becomes abhorrent to our silken tastes. We jump to conclusions which dethrone God. Then what?

This deterioration of moral sense needs to be reversed. We need to go back to the beginning, and start anew, taking God’s idea of retribution as our model. There is in every erect conscience an element of robustness which does not flinch at the spectacle of pain inflicted on wrong. Shakespeare has the opposite weakness in mind when he makes Hamlet, in self-reproach for not having avenged his father’s murder, say, “I am pigeon-livered, and lack gall.” We are all “pigeon-livered” in our natural mood towards the penal consequences of sin. Guilt enervates our moral judgments. On no other subject of human thought do we need more profoundly the tonic of moral sympathy with God.

2. Further, for truthful convictions on this subject, we need a cordial recognition of the intrinsic excellence of the retributive sentiment in a right mind. This is the vital point of our departure from the divine ideal in this thing. We repel from us the retributive idea because we mask it in

unrighteousness. We make wrong right, and right wrong; evil good, and good evil. That which in the divine government is *vindicative* of right, we degrade into the *vindictive*. The fragment of a syllable may be the pivot on which our thought turns into hostility to one of the most amiable attributes of the divine character. That sentiment which uplifts holy minds into adoring song in view of God's judgments, is the sense of the intrinsic excellence of retributive dealings with sin.

What is sin in the last analysis? It is pure malignity. It ripens into malign passion towards God. This is the germ and the efflorescence and the fruitage of it. The retributive sentiment in all right minds is the opposite to this. It is nothing else than an instinctive antagonism to malign character. It is hatred of that which hates God. Its assumption is, that it is right to punish that which hates God, and that in the nature of things such punishment is a necessity. Like all other right things, righteous punishment is intrinsically good. Minds loyal to God approve it, delight in it, find in it a profound satisfaction to something within them which refuses to be at peace without it. Pure justice is pure benevolence. Justice and love are twin stars of a binary constellation, in which each revolves at the bidding of the other. This was the sentiment which inspired the imprecatory Psalms. This it is that inspires gratulatory song in heaven in view of God's retributive deal-

ing with guilt. To hate guilt, or to hate God, this is the alternative. To punish guilt, or to annihilate God, this is the dilemma. Sin matured brings these intense extremes into contrast and collision, and the loyalty of right minds in heaven or on earth does not waver in its choice.

In certain conditions of things in this world, we all feel the excellence of retribution. Exigencies occur, in which, with the whole concentrated force of our being, we exult in retributive inflictions. Read Milton's sonnet on the slaughter in Piedmont:—

“Avenge, O Lord ! thy slaughtered saints, whose bones  
Lie scattered on the Alpine mountains cold!”

What is the meaning of the passionate appeals to Heaven, of which all free literatures are full, for the justice of an avenging Power to fall on tyrants? Are they all delusions? Are they inhuman and malign? If they are, the best poetry in history is a cheat. We must expurgate our libraries, and commit their noblest treasures to the flames. What means that human instinct of all nations and ages, which voiced itself in Hebrew jurisprudence, “Whoso sheddeth man’s blood, by man shall his blood be shed”?

“For murder-stroke shall murder-stroke be paid.”

Come down to the tragedies of common life and recent history. When Jesse Pomeroy allured a little girl to a desolate spot, and there, while she

begged for life and mother, mangled her hands and face with a shoemaker's knife in malign blood-thirst, and then murdered his victim to hide his crime, what said the public sentiment of Massachusetts? Did not something in us all—man, woman, and child—rise up, and demand the punishment of the wretch? We called him miscreant, brute, wild beast, fiend. No superlatives could exaggerate our indignation. The Sovereign State sprang to its feet to crush him. That on a diminutive scale was the retributive sentiment in righteous outburst.

When we read Motley's story of the Netherlands, and image to ourselves the scene of men burning, women buried alive, and children tossed from bayonet to bayonet, for worshiping the God of their fathers, do we not refuse to be at peace till our indignation is in some way appeased? The doctrine of a day of judgment becomes an exceeding comfort. "There are Scriptures written invisibly on men's hearts which do not come out till they are enraged." They become legible only under the white-heat of moral wrath.

When the sentiment of judicial anger is thus set aflame, we all understand the imprecatory Psalms. We are not squeamish in their interpretation, lest their severity might shock velvet tastes. We read them with eyes like steel. They say what we feel as nothing else does, and we understand why they are inserted in the Word of God. We thank God for the prophetic glimpse they

give us of a day of reckoning when things will be balanced.

It is recorded of the Rev. John Ryland, an English dissenting clergyman, that on one occasion he listened to a recital of the horrors of the slave-trade. He was so overwhelmed by the story of the “middle passage,” that he lost his self-control. He paced the floor in an almost frantic agony of indignation, and exclaimed, “O God! preserve me. O God! preserve me.” At length the cultured reverence of years gave way: probably the profane habits of his youth came back like a flood upon him. He broke out into a volley of imprecations upon the perpetrators of such outrages upon God and man. Can we find it in our hearts to blame him?

This is the retributive sentiment. Do we not revere the man who feels it, more than the man whose frigid soul is void of it? Who feels respect for the paralytic sensibilities which condemn it? Grant that it is a perilous virtue: still it *is* a virtue. Under the restrictions of right conscience, it is a noble thing to feel and to obey. A late writer, in describing the person of Daniel Webster in moments of oratorical passion, speaks of his “splendid wrath,” in which “his eyes became lamps.” Just that is the sense of retributive justice when it is set on fire by a great wrong. No government void of it is either great or wise or good. In the administration of a holy government, like that of God, it is pure benevolence — that, nothing less.

He would be less than God if he did not feel it: we are less than men if we do not reverently sympathize with Him in it. Until we can do this, our whole conception and judgment of eternal retribution inflicted on eternal guilt will be twisted awry. Our puny impulses of compassion for the guilty will set themselves against His grand, robust benevolence. We shall find ourselves resisting with maudlin tears that which the great Heart of the universe approves exultingly.

3. Another corrective of our views of the retributive element in the divine government is a more adequate conviction than that which commonly exists of the freedom and sovereignty of the human will. Here, perhaps, is the point of supreme weakness in the moral convictions of men. It is made such by two prolific sources of evil. One is, that sin itself tends to enervate man's consciousness that he *is* free. The freedom is in him, sovereign and intact, under any accumulations of depravity: but the consciousness of it is debilitated; and the evidence of the fact, therefore, from that source is impaired. Men read it awry, and sometimes backward or upside down,—in any way that shall confute conscience, or give it the lie.

The other evil is, that we have inherited from the past an immense legacy of fatalistic philosophy. Pagan theology is the science of “the Fates.” Heathen poetry celebrates resistless destiny. The tragedies of Æschylus recognize no superior divinity. Our English literature is pervaded with

the notion that sin is a constitutional disease. Guilt shares responsibility with ill-luck. As Lord Byron puts it, "Man is an unlucky rascal." Christian theology, all along the line of its history, has had to contend with this inherited tyranny of fatalism. Our old historic creeds, which contain the best thought of Christian ages, bear scars significant of the conflict. Some of them jump the difficulty by flat contradictions. Slowly and with militant tread has the truth of the freedom of the will toiled up the highway of our modern faith. Not yet even has it laid off its coat of mail.

Meanwhile, other central truths of our theology have been kept in practical abeyance by the want of an uncompromising conviction of the sovereignty of the human will over belief, over conduct, over character, over every thing that makes a man, and therefore over destiny. One illustration of this is, that the moral glory of retribution has been, and is still, under an eclipse. We behold it through clouds and darkness. If sin is a predestined necessity, to punish it would be infinitely more criminal than the sin. If temptation rises above the level of will-power, and drowns it out, or even momentarily submerges it, so that the consciousness of its supremacy expires, sin, under such conditions, is no more sin. Penalty for crime in such circumstances is malevolent torture. Man thus caught in the toils of fate is no more a sinner, but a victim. Inherited depravity, if it could

exist, would be only inherited misfortune. Inherited degeneracy does exist, and that *is* misfortune. Inherited depravity is quite another thing. The damnation of a soul for it would be an outrage upon the moral sense of the universe: it would exalt the sufferer to the rank of martyr. He would be the superior of his judge. Moral government built on such acts of retribution would be the supreme of all tragedies. It would be the government of a malignant God.

It must have been some such notion as this of man's lapsed estate, that led Carlyle to say in one of his cynical moods, "If hell must be dared, it must." Under the tyranny of such a faith, we must all say it in sheer resistance to despair. Faith in such a government of the world, administered by an almighty Being, would be enough to make it a world of maniacs. No man ever realized its existence, and lived. John Foster, by a false theology at this point, was driven to falsify his faith at other points. As the bulging of an elastic ball at one spot compels compensatory indentation at another, so in the structure of a man's moral beliefs, excess here necessitates deficiency there. Fatality in guilt compels the denial of retribution.

Our popular theology to-day is suffering immensely, yet to the believers unconsciously, from the causes here indicated. Men are making light of sin because they more than half believe that they can not help it. They are "unlucky rascals,"

and their ill-luck has to bear the brunt of the rascality. Men who are standing on the confines of the world of woe, and are slowly ripening for its demonized society, are thinking very well of themselves because false teaching, seconded by self-pity, has persuaded them that they are doing about as well as they can do. Man is frail ; it is human to err ; who is he that sinneth not ? Men are more sinned against than sinning ; sin is the heritage of an unbalanced brain ; the fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge ; certainty is the equivalent of necessity ; who ever acted the contrary ? Thus men reason when hard pressed by an accusing conscience. In certain moral exigencies we are all Mohammedans. "It is *kismet*—what can we do ?" Even our charity in judgment of others, we turn into self-justification in judging ourselves.

Accordingly, penal justice, when we face it as a sure reality, loses its divine radiance ; and we think of it, not as justice inflicted on the guilty, but as misfortune heaped upon the weak. Half the human race, more or less, must have another probation because they are so unlucky in this. Another world must give compensation for their faring so hardly here. To our distempered vision, eternal pains inflicted upon such "*miserable sinners*" would be eternal despotism. Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right ?

There is a vast amount of this sophisticated reasoning grumbling in the popular theology against

the faith of our fathers. Good and able men, too, are drifting into sympathy with these vagaries through the force of amiable sensibilities. They are duped by a craving for an Æolian theology. They are unconscious of the fatal hurt they are doing to minds less intelligent, and consciences less pure, than theirs.

As a partial corrective of all this, we need to tone up our faith in the absolute sovereignty of the human will. Never under any conceivable conditions is sin a misfortune only: the instant that it becomes that, it is no more sin. A just God never damned a soul for moral disease, and never will. He will as soon send a man to hell for a dislocated hip or an infirm memory. Will in man, within the range ordained for its free action, is as autocratic as will in God. To a being with such a lordly endowment, probationary existence anywhere, so far as we know, is a fair trial. Around the universe he would carry his destiny with him. He has that in his possession which no power but his own can crush. Every human soul is a moral Gibraltar: its conquest is impossible but from within. God never touches it, or permits temptation to touch it, in such manner as to paralyze its supremacy. "God will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able." When Satan was permitted to try the moral temper of Job, the Lord said, "He is in thine hand, but save his life." So in every instance of temptation, there is one thing which God holds in impregnable

reserve. Next to His own sovereignty, He prizes that of every being made in His own image. From the archangel to a new-born infant, He guards that jewel as the apple of his eye. If wrong were done to its integrity, the universe would be shattered into chaos.

Guilt, therefore, *is* guilt. It is not misfortune; it is not ill-luck; it is not imbecility; it is not disease; it is not want of moral balance; it is not inherited depravity; it is not fate; it is *guilt* pure and simple. Any trial consistent with a man's moral freedom, so far as we know, is a fair trial. If a man has more than that, he has more than justice: it is grace. Up to the full extent of conscious wrong, a man is damnable. Fate is for idiots. The soul that sinneth, it shall die. This is justice. It is not justice with a reservation: it is *justice* full and absolute. Being just, it is glorious and divine: it partakes of God's infinite majesty. It is one of those ultimate ideas, beyond or above which human thought can conceive of nothing more pure or more sublime. Yet this is the retributive element in God's government. If it is not right, nothing is right. If it is not a fit theme of exulting song, the universe does not contain such in all its history.

## IX.

### CORRECTIVES OF THE POPULAR FAITH IN RETRIBUTION.

#### PART II.

IT was observed in the preceding essay, that we need rectified conceptions of the sovereignty of the human will to create an adequate idea of the malign nature of sin. Whoever originated the saying, “It was worse than a crime: it was a blunder,” betrayed the atomic notion of sin, which, for the most part, rules the popular morals. As if any thing could be worse than a crime except a blacker crime! It was a pagan thought. Under its illusions, men find food for comedy in sin’s vagaries. Profane men coin sneers and jokes out of the words which express it and its doom. Why is it, that, in certain strata of society, force of utterance is appreciated in no other forms? Why is it, that, on the platform, nothing else is so sure to command the applause of a popular audience as an oath? The more irreverent it is, the more delectable.

This is sometimes illustrated where we least expect it. On one occasion, Ralph Waldo Emer-

son was lecturing in Boston; and for a half-hour they found nothing in his refined speculations to respond to with those signs of approval which a popular assembly loves so well. At length he exploded one of his inimitable antitheses, of which the latter clause was, "Damn George Washington." *That* his audience understood, and they gave him their applause. It was not the name, it was not any very definite notion of the thing, it was nothing but the *word* which tickled their frivolous irreverence. If he had said, "Damn the North Pole," the effect would have been the same; and if he had quoted the favorite anathema of sailors, it would probably have been doubled.

Indeed, the popular sentiment goes to a greater extreme. There is a prepossession for wickedness in the world which makes it an essential element of a manly character. Alfieri said, "The crimes of Italy are proof of the superiority of the stock." We find a similar idea in Shakspeare:—

"Best men are molded out of faults,  
And for the most become the better  
For being a little bad."

The collateral evidences of human depravity are nowhere more glaring than in the arts of self-delusion by which we cover up from the vision of our own consciences the blackness of darkness and the weird, chaotic damnation involved in the very nature of this colossal evil which we call sin. Common life is yet immensely below the level

of Scriptural thought in its average conceptions of this thing.

Yet it deserves remark, that literature often gives the lie to this popular delusion. What is the literary idea of sin as represented in the best works of human genius? When genius would portray in fiction the interior working of a great crime in a human soul, it falls back approximately upon the biblical idea. It reproduces some resemblance to the teaching of St. Paul. Witness the whole history of tragedy from Sophocles to Shakespeare. Shakespeare's Lady Macbeth suffers the biblical "wrath of God." In the modern romance, so far as imagination is successful in awakening the response of the human heart to its descriptions of crime, it works in the line of inspired thought. Genius paints guilt as carrying within itself the penal fires which inspiration represents God as inflicting. In one respect, indeed, the literary idea surpasses that of biblical inspiration. It is a merciless idea. It leaves guilt in solitary helplessness to its self-wrought retributions. It knows no such thing as forgiveness; finds no place in the system for atonement; discovers no remedial or compensatory expedients. Once guilty, for ever guilty, and for ever doomed—this is the verdict of the literary instinct in its portraiture of guilt at its maturity. Look at Hawthorne's description of its working in the "Marble Faun." Nowhere in the Scriptures do you find a conception so merciless and maleficent.

In Hawthorne's theology, even the knowledge of another's crime imparts to an innocent looker-on some of the elements of inevitable doom. He says, "Every crime destroys more Edens than its own. While there is a single guilty being in the universe, each innocent one must be tortured by that guilt." Again, he paints "the chill and heavy misery which only the innocent can experience, though it possesses many of the characteristics that mark the sense of guilt." Again, describing the remorse of Hilda for the crime of Miriam, he tells of her "heart-sickness, her dismal certainty of the existence of evil, her awful loneliness in her secret knowledge of the crime." "It enveloped her whithersoever she went." It created a "chill dungeon which kept her in its gray twilight, and fed her with its unwholesome air, fit only for a criminal to breathe and pine in. She could not escape it. In the effort to do so, she stumbled ever and again over this deadly idea of mortal guilt. Poor sufferer for another's sin!"

Such is guilt as genius paints it. Such are its appalling ravages when unrelieved by remedial devices. Link, now, with the biblical idea of retribution, Hawthorne's idea of incorrigible and hopeless sin, and where can you find in the Scriptures any symbol of an eternal hell which appears unnatural or inhuman? The two things germinate and grow together, like to like, with hideous affinity. They are in exact keeping. Each necessitates the other. No such suffering can exist without its

antecedent guilt: no such guilt can exist without its compensatory suffering. This is the working, not alone of genius rioting in a fictitious world: it is the working of all deep and intense natures which have brought a Christian conscience to bear upon the awful problem of the existence of evil. Human nature everywhere, sitting in judgment upon it, pronounces it to be true.

4. Yet another corrective which the popular notion of retribution needs, is a more profound recognition of the impracticable nature of sin under a government of moral freedom.

In a moral being, the range of sin is bounded only by the range of faculty. Whatever he *can* be as a moral being in point of magnitude or versatile capacity, that he can be in the magnitude and versatility of guilt. All there is of him is free to sin. From this, it follows that one of the most profound problems of moral government, perhaps to Infinite Wisdom the most profound, is, “What to do with guilt?” If it were subject to government by mechanical forces, the problem might be soon solved. It might be crushed as by an earthquake, or exploded like dynamite; and, fearful as the ruin might be, that might be the end of it. It might go into history as a past, and by and by a forgotten, catastrophe. Human government might rid itself of crime by the extermination of criminals the world over. The tramp of a million armed men has stamped out rebellion in a province, and it has been heard of no more. Substitute

the scaffold for the penitentiary, and the penitentiaries might be vacant in a month. Human rulers have sometimes approximated the policy of extermination in the sanguinary severity of their criminal codes, and the savagery of the usages of war. But the moral sense of the world has protested; and the more sensitive it has become to the sacredness of human life, the more intricate has the problem grown, "What shall we do with crime?"

Take but a solitary case. Are not all humane governments at their wit's end in devising adequate restraints of the crime of wife-beating? It is assuming, in our days, the dignity of a triumphant and unmanageable outrage on civilization, which law can neither prevent nor adequately punish. What is the meaning of the blunt proposal here and there, to restore the old element of torture to the criminal code for the punishment of this crime? The nineteenth century looks back helplessly to the ninth. Is it not a confession that we do not know what else to do? Crime is for ever taking on forms which balk the devices of corrective justice. Our boasted advances in science and invention redouble the resources of guilt to war on mankind. "Dynamite-fiends" set thrones tottering, and nations trembling; and they laugh at law when it would lay hands upon them. There seems to be no end to this conflict of sin with social order. Humanity goes down in the struggle. Human nature cries out for vengeance, and wise men are dumb.

The perplexity is not restricted to the control of gross and brutal crimes. It runs a tangled thread through the unwritten laws and amenities of social life. Why is it that a subtile law of etiquette commands suppression of conversation on personal religion unless some hint has been given that it will not be unwelcome? It is because religious thought, the instant that it assumes a personal bearing, runs against a universal consciousness of wrong. Personal religion in every mind starts with the idea of sin. Therefore it disturbs equipoise of feeling. Generally it *is* unwelcome. It is the key to a dark and secret history. Men are shy of it. They do not know what to do with it. Guilt is coiled up behind it; and men do not know what to say of that, or what to do with it. Everywhere present in the lair of human consciousness is this untamed sense of wrong. Our human instinct is to bury it in silence, and we shut the mouths of others by not opening our own. We feel it only to fear it, and to suffer. Therefore we weave over and around it the peremptory ban of social etiquette, to bind it, and thrust it out of speech. What else *can* we do with it?

Still more complicated and unmanageable does the problem become when guilt threatens the very being of society. In the world as it is, guilt and brute force are in the ascendant; and they concentrate and fortify themselves against law. "Dangerous classes" threaten all that makes life desirable. The chief question of law is, How

shall wrong be kept under, and within the bounds necessary to social well-being? Everywhere it is a disturbing force. Men find no place for it in the constitution of things. It is war against nature. All that we can do with it, is to shut it out of sight, behind bolts and bars, in places of its own, and leave it there.

Yes, after ages of study and experiment in criminal jurisprudence, human law has not advanced in its treatment of incorrigible sin beyond the dungeon and the scaffold. We are all born to the sight of jails and state prisons. We sleep in peace, only because we know that "dangerous classes" are locked up there behind armed sentinels. If mobs set them loose, we tremble in our beds from nightfall till the morning. If prisons fail us, we take to revolvers; and with those the desperado is our superior. What shall we do? So obdurate and impracticable a thing is guilt as an element in the social organism! Time works no change: law grows no wiser. The government of incorrigible guilt has evolved the policy of retributive penalties, and there it stops. Neither justice nor benevolence can take a step beyond. In this respect, Law stands where it did when it laid the iron hand on the brow of the first murderer.

Now, the conditions of the problem are not essentially different under the government of God. Incorrigible guilt there, moral freedom remaining intact, is the same impracticable thing as elsewhere. What shall a righteous sovereign do with

it? What *can* He do? Exterminate it by sheer omnipotence He can not. The million armed men might devastate a continent, and yet not stamp out one guilty thought. Sin, under the law of moral freedom, bears no relation to physical force. It is no irreverence to say that God can not put an end to it by sheer power. Can He make yesterday to-day? For the same reason, and in the same sense, He can not stop the ravages of sin by mechanical devices. He can not bury it by earthquakes, nor crush it by cyclones.

Hence it is, that God can not save a sinner if the sinner will not be saved. What shall He do? Shall He forgive? But, the guilty remaining unrepentant, that would be a farce. An unholy universe would laugh at universal amnesty, and the moral sense of holy beings would resent it as an outrage upon law and grace. It could not add an iota to the happiness of any being, or relieve one pang of suffering. The great problem would remain unsolved, “What to do with guilt?”

Under moral government, if guilt can not be quelled by means of moral suasion or its equivalents, nothing can reach it but retribution. Man’s own will has the decision within itself: if he will not be saved, he can not be. Nothing is left but retributive devices for the protection of the innocent. And of these, the first and chief is to leave guilt to itself. Give it a place where it can be let alone to act out its own wretched nature. As human law has shut upon it the doors

of the penitentiary and the dungeon, so divine law has devised a place where guilt matured and incorrigible shall be shut in to its own malign solitude, and left there. But guilt thus left and turned back upon itself is hell. Call it what we may, disguise it as we please, it is the “second death.” It is the world of weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth. What else can it be? Who is to blame for it? Would God be worthy of trust if He did otherwise?

Let the last inquiry be answered by another. When Chief Justice Shaw, with tremulous voice and streaming eyes, pronounced sentence of death upon his friend, Professor Webster, for the murder of Dr. Parkman, did he do right, or wrong? Did the deed deserve the reverence, or the execration, of mankind? One or the other it did deserve,—which? That was an act of retributive justice. Either it was a deed of high and noble virtue, or it was murder. Which was it? So when God pronounces the sentence of eternal death upon eternal guilt, He does the thing that is right, and the only thing. It is just; being just, it is worthy of God; being godlike, it is intrinsically excellent and amiable. It deserves, as it receives, the exulting approval of all holy minds. He does all that He *can* do with such obdurate infatuation under the conditions of moral freedom.

It is futile to say that God’s government is unlike man’s. As it respects the principle in hand, it is not unlike man’s. Both are founded on im-

mutable right. The retributive element is the same in both. The only difference is, that in the divine administration retributive judgments are infinitely more equitable, retributive sanctions infinitely more imperative, and the execution of retributive decree is infinitely more exact in its adjustment to ill-desert. In the mind of God, be it repeated, pure justice is pure benevolence. We can not be in sympathy with God until we acknowledge this, and recognize His retributive inflictions with the same grateful reverence with which we adore His redeeming love.

Moreover, it is due to the completeness of faith in this matter, that we recognize the personal agency of God in His retributive administration. It is true that penal justice comes about through the operation of general laws. The moral constitution of things provides for and necessitates it. The make of the human mind causes a transgressor to become at the maturity of his guilt his own executioner. He is self-tried, self-convicted, self-condemned, and self-damned. But in the whole process, from beginning to end, God executes His own decrees. He never abrogates His prerogative as the supreme Judge of sin. Whatever suffering sin creates, He inflicts. The same retributive sentiment which we find in ourselves approving and demanding the punishment of guilt, exists in the mind of God, and there approves and demands the same. Here as elsewhere God acts through laws; but they are laws of His own creation, and they

express the decree of His own will. We yield to a moral weakness which dishonors God, if we conceal from our own minds the retributive personality of God under cover of eternal laws. It is the same error which agnosticism commits when it hides the divine Person behind pantheistic devices. God, the supreme and living One, acts in the fiery judgments and remorseful inflictions of conscience, and in all the ramifications of moral government by which guilt is made to work out its own damnation. The popular theology in this respect needs reconstruction. The pulpit in this matter has a mission to this generation which it can not ignore without shame.

The views here presented have a significant bearing on one form of objection to the doctrine of retribution which is, for the most part, passed over in silence by the pulpit. The objection assumes a personal character. We are told that a humane, and especially a cultured, mind *can not* believe the doctrine. It is too abhorrent to benign sensibilities. Our inmost souls are shocked and racked by the conception. Preachers are charged with an induration of humane sensibilities in proclaiming it. We are told that our souls are flint. We are even believed to be guilty of some intellectual legerdemain by which we preach what we do not at heart believe. We do not because we can not. We preach under stress of professional necessity.

An English critic gives expression to this charge

in a review of the preaching of President Edwards in this style : “ He disrobed himself of human sympathies. He resolved himself absolutely into a thinking apparatus. He deliberately looks into Hell, and the whole heat of its burnings can not melt into a tear the ice in his eye. He gazes on the greater portion of his brother-men stretched to eternity upon a wheel, and his eyelid quivers no more than if he saw a butterfly.”

To us who know the traditions of the gentle and quick sensibilities, even the poetic temperament, of President Edwards, this passes by as the idle wind. Whatever else the illustrious author of the “Essay on the Will” may have been, he was not made of cast-iron. But the popular notion of him contains a notion of our faith in retribution which deserves an answer. And our answer is, that be it true, or not true, the biblical reception of God’s retributive inflictions by holy minds exceeds it in apparent vindictiveness. The heavenly temperament is more apathetic than ours. Are believers here malevolent? Then believers there are immensely more so. The redeemed mind not only does not quail before retributive disclosures, but exalts and magnifies them. The public sentiment of the holy universe indorses them with rejoicings as a sublime and benignant revelation of God. The distress which we feel in view of the appalling reality is silently rebuked by its contrast with inspired and heavenly experiences.

Which, then, is true? Which compasses the

ultimate discoveries of eternity, when our minds shall have grown old in study of the deep things of God, — our enervated, tremulous, paralytic faith, or the robust and exulting vision of St. John?

## X.

### RETRIBUTION IN THE LIGHT OF REASON.

#### PART I.

THE foregoing discussions on the subject of Retribution have given rise to a considerable correspondence. One letter from a stranger to me, an intelligent and earnest unbeliever in the doctrine of endless punishment, has called forth this reply. I am not at liberty to publish the letter of my correspondent; but the answer is given here, though greatly enlarged, in the hope that it may suggest to other minds one way of putting the doctrine which is not open to the objections which are urged against it in other forms.

*Dear Sir,* — I thank you for the frankness and courtesy of your letter. I recognize in it the thought of an earnest mind with which it is a pleasure to confer, whether we can agree, or not, in our ultimate beliefs. The most that I can hope to do in manuscript reply, is possibly to put the doctrine of retribution into a different form from that in which you have been accustomed to conceive of it, and to deny it. It is a subject on

which the vital question turns on the way we put things. If I succeed in making it clear that there is a way of putting it in which it is not open to the odium with which you now associate it, you will not think your time lost in reflecting upon the following suggestions; viz., —

1. The doctrine as I would state it in its simplest form is this: That endless sin must be punished with endless misery. It is not that the sin of an hour or of one lifetime will be visited with eternal pains, except as it involves the sequence of eternal sin. God, in the administration of His government, adjusts results to actual conditions, not to conditions only possible or conceivable. He adjusts punishment to character as it is in the concrete, not to sin in the abstract. It is in one sense true, therefore, that man is punished for ever for the sins of this life, but only as the sins of this life create a character which will perpetuate sin for ever. We involve ourselves in hopeless confusion if we attempt to frame a conception of the divine government in the abstract, as related to character in the abstract. God deals with things as they are. He deals with a sinful character as a whole. Time and eternity are not separated in His decrees, and the one set over as a balance to the other. Both form one destiny. Sin is punished for what it is, and so long as it is. This is just. Both reason and revelation teach, that, so long as a man sins, so long he must suffer; and this is the doctrine of endless punishment.

Unending sin will involve unending suffering. Revelation teaches that some men *will* sin for ever; therefore they must suffer for ever.

This to reason seems intrinsically right. Does it not? No moral instincts which are loyal to God revolt from it as an outrage. Why should they? More than this, endless pain to endless sin is inevitable in the nature of things. Sin and suffering are indissoluble evils. Where the one is, there the other must be. What the one is, that the other must be in intensity. As well think to separate pain from a lacerated nerve as from an outraged conscience. As well expect to pierce your eyeball with a lancet painlessly as to save from misery a moral being whose nature is once gangrened through and through with a sense of guilt. A guilty being has only to discover himself as he is, to be overwhelmed with suffering for ever. That discovery is inevitable in eternity. There are no shams in a spiritual world.

2. Sin is entirely a voluntary wrong. Here and everywhere, in its initial stages and in its maturity, it is the work of the sinner's own will. So far as it is not that, it is not sin. Temptation is not sin. Inherited bias to evil is not sin. God will not punish it any more than other misfortune. Man never inherits guilt. Man or demon in sin is there because he chooses to be there. In Hell as on earth, man will be a sinner because he will choose to be such. Sin is never inflicted as the punishment of sin. Devils are not in sin as a doom.

They do not suffer it: they create it. It has not come upon them unawares: they have willed it so. This is an elemental truth, which, because we can pack it in a nutshell, we do not appreciate. It covers the moral universe with its corollaries. More than half of the mystery of evil is solved by it.

3. Sin is of such a nature as to perpetuate itself. This is the law of all character. If left to itself, with no remedial influence from without, sin never dwindle<sup>s</sup> into nothing. Crimes never shrink into foibles; passions never subside into subacute eccentricities; vice never shrinks into infirmity. Once guilty, always guilty, is the law of all depravity, no external power intervening. Virtue is under the same law. It is the normal condition of character as such. Where the tree falls, there it shall lie,—not by fatality, but by the self-perpetuating force of moral choice. Hence the intrinsic and appalling evil of sin. Hence the necessity of subjecting it to imperative control in a moral universe.

4. Sin everywhere is under a law of growth. All character is under the same law. Guilt, therefore, becomes more obdurate and intense with time. It is so here: we have reason to believe that it will be so in eternity. In a spiritual state of being, the self-delusions and disguises of sin are removed: then sin, by its innate law of growth, mounts up into matured, finished character. Impulsive sin settles into a consolidated principle of

evil. Guilty desire swells into guilty passion. Evil slumbering below the depths of consciousness, is roused into sleepless vigilance. Sin thus matured is pure malignity. It is character demonized. Hatred of God and of all good, is sin at its climax of evolution. We find only approaches to it here, but they are enough to disclose what sin must be when it is left to itself to act itself out without concealment or restraint. It is the most appalling factor in the destiny of a moral being.

5. The misery consequent upon sin, which common speech calls its punishment, is chiefly spiritual in its nature. We do see, indeed, that in this world sin creates bodily disorder, and therefore bodily pain. Guilt builds up a physical tyranny. Some crimes have a fruitage in characteristic diseases, which follow from no other cause. The bloated, discolored, mutilated body proclaims its bondage to an evil spirit. A similar law *may* hold sway over the spiritual body. The analogy of nature seems to suggest that. But the Scriptures do not affirm it; and I prefer, therefore, to say that the punishment of sin is chiefly spiritual. As the cause is of the spirit, so is its penal consequence, the body being but an incident to both. It is the misery of conscious guilt, of guilt passionate and obdurate, of guilt concentrated and malign, of guilt accumulating and without end; of moral disorder through and through; of conscious antagonism to God and to all good; of the reciprocal antagonism of God, to whom guilt is abhorrent;

of the chronic warfare which this mutual hostility between God and the guilty engenders; of the self-contempt and self-loathing inseparable from the extreme of full-grown depravity; and of the intolerable moral solitude in which no second party can share either guilt or doom; — the misery of this conscious experience, making up the whole being of the man, without alleviation by one right emotion or holy purpose or godlike thought, — *this* is the punishment of sin. This is the endless curse.

In your letter, you put the case as that of a tender and guileless maiden in her “teens,” guilty of foibles only, yet not a saint, and therefore “roasting” over slow and dancing flames, while God looks on as at an entertainment. I put it as the case of a demonized being, like Nero or the Borgias, or like Mrs. Stowe’s “Legare” in “Uncle Tom’s Cabin,” grown up to the point of supreme depravity, suffering the rage of his own guilty passions, torturing himself by his own choice of evil as his supreme good, malign in his emotions, an enemy of God, while God has done all that infinite wisdom can do to save him. Is there no difference between the two pictures? Is there no distinction between a doom to evil under almighty tyranny, and the voluntary choice of moral suicide? Are both equally open to the odium of revolting and incredible dogmas?

6. Now combine all the facts thus far named in one, and we have this resultant: That a sinner,

incorrigible in guilt, matured in depraved tastes, at the climax of ripened evil, malignant through all the ramifications of his being, enamored of evil as his supreme desire, *makes his own hell*. Nothing conceivable as within God's power to inflict, or man's imagination to conceive, can form a destiny of more fearful woe. No damnation can surpass that which a malign being inflicts upon himself. Milton's Satan has the gist of the whole doctrine, — “Myself am Hell.” The literature of tragedy in its picturing of remorse abounds with the same conception. And this a guilty being at the summit of matured character chooses as his own. He has created and nurtured his own demonized passions. He chooses and seeks his demonized associates. He elects as his abode the place allotted to a demonized society.

Swedenborg had one revelation which is true to nature, though one may not believe it the more for his saying it. He declares that angels taught him that “God never thrusts a man into Hell: he thrusts himself in.” He says elsewhere, speaking of spirits who had lived wickedly here, yet were taken temporarily into heaven, that “They gasp there, as for breath, and writhe about like fishes out of the water in the atmosphere, and like animals in the receiver of an air-pump, the air being exhausted.”

This accords with all that we know of the nature of moral being. In a spiritual world, state must be as character. The being chooses that it should

be so. Place and character at enmity engender acutest misery. Lost man, therefore, goes to Hell of his own accord. His whole moral nature gravitates thither. Like seeks its like. Set a lost man adrift in the universe, with a free pass to go where he will, and he will seek society of his own rank. Guilt will define the frightful caste to which he will of choice ally himself. Heaven, were its doors wide open to him, would be a hell of profounder misery to him than the abode of despair. Any thing is a less evil, in his estimate, than existing consciously in the presence and under the eye of a holy God.

You remember, doubtless, the story told of Lafayette in the prison at Olmutz. His jailers received orders never to leave him one moment out of sight. Through a small aperture in the door of his dungeon, a human eye was to be always upon him. He said, when he was released, that all other tortures of that solitary cell were as nothing to him, in comparison with the unremitting consciousness of that human eye. He declared that in time it would have crazed him. So I conceive a lost man in eternity would flee, were it possible, from the eye of God. God's presence makes Heaven a hell to his distorted tastes. You will recall, from St. John's vision, the "Rocks and mountains, fall on us!" Any thing, any place, any society, any solitude, any chaos, is welcome in the struggle to get away from God! This is sin in its innate gravitation! It must be realized in the final evolution of a sinner's destiny.

This process of moral segregation has its beginning in this world. It is perceptible in the voluntary working of moral affinities. The good and the evil drift asunder. The good seek the society of the good, and the evil that of the evil. Elective affinities incline each one to his moral kindred. Like goes to its like. The cleavage is not compulsory: it is voluntary. Its lines are perceptible through all the strata of society. So, in the relation of men to God, the wicked do not cultivate communion with Him. Wicked men are commonly prayerless men. As they approach the maturity of consolidated character, in which opinions are fixed, tastes developed, habits confirmed, they have less and less to do with God and godly men. One such honest correspondent of mine confesses, “The time when I must meet God is unwelcome to me. I do not think of it twice in a year. I never think of it when I can help it.” This process of moral alienation, at its completion, may be one phase of the “departure” which God decrees at the final judgment. Estrangement from God at its climax is a voluntary going into outer darkness. This it is to be “accursed.” Every moral being carries the possibility of it in his nature.

7. This liability to a voluntary abandonment of all good by a moral being results from the same conditions which render possible his blessedness in God.

Nature’s law from least to greatest things is a law of mysterious *duality*. The possibilities of all

things are massed in two directions. The same constitution of any thing which is capable of good is also capable of evil. The nerve which can give pleasure can also give pain. The make of your eyeball, which discovers a world of delight to your sense of beauty, may rack your brain with agony under the ravages of that insect discovered by Dr. Graëfe, whose natural food is the optic nerve. The even heart-beats which send life throbbing through your frame with no conscious will of yours, may, in the twinkling of an eye, become the throes of *angina pectoris*.

We do not know, that, in the nature of things, this dual economy could have been dispensed with. We only see that it exists. It runs through all the ramifications of human life. From a tooth-ache to a soul's damnation, all evil displaces corresponding good, which, in the nature of things, was equally possible. Nothing has been created for the sake of evil. No nerve exists for the sake of pain; no temptation for the sake of sin; no devil for the sake of his malignity. Balancing possibilities of good offset them all.

This dual structure governs the system of man's probationary discipline and its eternal sequences. By as much as a man may be demonized in character, and therefore accursed in destiny, by so much may he be made godlike in both. Endless blessing and endless curse are in the balance of every man's destiny. The weight which tips the scale is the breath of his own choice. *That*, the

winds of heaven are not permitted to visit too roughly. Not legions of demoniac tempters can force him to make that choice to his own hurt. God guards its freedom as the apple of His eye. No power but its own can destroy a soul.

8. The principle of liberty in human destiny by which a lost man achieves his own perdition, needs to be offset by another. It is that God expresses in the inevitable misery of sin His own retributive sentiment as a moral governor. He impresses thus upon the universe His own abhorrence of guilt. The paradox is essential to the truth in its completeness, that man creates his own damnation, and that God inflicts it. This complication is no anomaly: it exists in all those phenomena in which God and man unite in one result. The two agencies intermingle. God decrees what man performs. Retributive decrees are executed by man in self-destruction.

We lose one of the prime elements of punitive justice if we so project man's self-ruin as to conceal the fact of the divine infliction. This is never the manner of the Scriptures. There the divine infliction is emphasized: it is made a theme of devout adoration. No hint is given that it needs hiding from an upright mind. In the nature of things, this can not be. We know God only as we know ourselves. The same retributive sentiment in kind must exist in Him as in us. It finds expression, as ours does, in the infliction of retributive pains on the incorrigibly guilty. Among the

most amiable attributes of the divine character in the biblical estimate, is that holy abhorrence of sin which goes out from His inmost nature in retributive inflictions. Without it He would be no longer God: He could no longer command the affectionate reverence of the holy universe, or the compulsory respect of the guilty and the damned.

We must not, then, in deference to our debilitated sensibilities, put into hiding the personal agency of God in the doom of the lost. It involves no contradiction. Nor does it display any more mystery than that which exists in all other phenomena in which the agency of God and that of man are interblended. The sowing and the reaping of a wheat-field are in this respect the same as the sowing and the reaping of an eternal destiny. The laws of the soil and the sun and the rains are God's will: man's use of them is man's will. So in moral government, man's use of his own being to his own destruction is his own doing; the *make* of that being by which, if perverted, it becomes suicidal to its own happiness, is God's infliction of retributive justice.

9. The numbers of the lost, I conceive, do not enter into the main question at all. If there is one lost being in the universe, the mystery of it is as profound as if there were countless millions. The question of proportions we have no means of solving. When an inquiry on that subject was addressed to our Lord, He evaded an answer. I can make a good showing, I think, for the belief

that the saved will be the immense majority, and the lost an inconsiderable fraction of the sum-total of the race. But God has chosen to withhold the truth from us, and speculation is useless. Each one of us has enough to do to make his own salvation sure, and to lead as many others to Heaven as he can on the way. But when men pronounce this a lost world, meaning by it that the great majority of the race will at last people the world of despair, they affirm more than I find in the Word of God.

The question of the numbers of the lost, I repeat, does not affect the argument one whit. But it may aggravate the dramatic impression of the truth on our sensibilities. The tragic look of the retributive element in the divine economy is the more appalling as the numbers multiply who incur its execution. Objection to the doctrine is mainly a matter of feeling. Men feel the same in kind, and often their judgment is distorted by it in their estimate of human government. Why is it so difficult to find jurymen for a capital trial? Why is it that imprisonment for life, though often in the sentence, is rarely in its execution? If a thief is running from the sheriff, why does the crowd in the street help the thief? Reason is not clear-headed if sympathy is overloaded.

Therefore it is pertinent to relieve the present argument from the pressure of overstrained sensibilities. The fact should be emphasized, that the Scriptures nowhere affirm that the major part of

mankind are doomed in the retributive purposes of God. The Bible says nothing about majorities. It offers to all men a free salvation. What their free action will be, it says not. I prefer to leave the question of proportion where God has lodged it,—in His kingdom of reserve. We make a wise advance, and achieve a grand conquest over difficulties, when we learn to accept in silence the silences of God. That which He has not seen fit to disclose, we have no call to affirm or to deny.

## XI.

### RETRIBUTION IN THE LIGHT OF REASON.

#### PART II.

SOME additional suggestions are necessary to a rounded statement of the subject, as I am accustomed to put it to my own mind. Proceeding in numerical order for the sake of definiteness, I remark,—

10. That the real difficulties of the faith I hold, I freely admit. They are very great, and some of them inexplicable. I do not say unanswerable, but inexplicable. My faith may answer them when my reason can not solve them. Make them what you will, I think I could double your estimate. The whole subject is a gloomy and heaving sea to my troubled vision. I see through a glass darkly. I can not say that forty years of study of what good and able men, on both sides of the question, have thought upon it, have added any thing to a solution of the mystery. They have only relieved the doctrine—and this is much to the purpose of answering difficulties—of contradictions and other infelicities of statement in its ancient forms. “Seraphic doctors” have spent their force upon

the mystery in vain. "Advanced thinkers" have quailed before it, and found refuge in defiant and illogical denials. A new generation has come upon the stage since we were young, and new generations often bring with them new solutions of old problems; but no new thing in religion or in philosophy has advanced human thought one jot towards a solution of this one. Thinkers stand aghast before it as they did four thousand years ago, perhaps, when the patriarch inquired in his inexplicable misery, "Wherefore do the wicked live?" That question, extended from this to other worlds, finds no answer. The ages are dumb before it. There lies the fact of evil and its penal fires embedded in the Christian theology, and there it lies in reduplicated gloom in the theology of nature. To me it looks as terrific as when it first threw its lurid glare over my childish conceptions of human destiny. I concede all this. I will not shrink from any sequence in the argument which may fairly be derived from the concession.

But the mystery of a truth is one thing; the evidence of the fact, another. My belief has to do only with the evidence of the fact. In the point of fact, I find that reason and revelation conspire to bear witness to one thing. This difference only, I discover,—that reason is the more formidable and portentous of the two. Reason is merciless in its teachings. The only remedial or remonstrant force I find, which is at all commen-

surate with the ravages of sin in this world, I read in the words of Jesus Christ. The depth saith it is not in me, and the sea saith it is not with me. Nature is mute as the Sphinx.

I find the mystery, however, not where you seem to locate it. Why God should have *created* beings who would weave around themselves the network of the endless curse, is the mystery which I do not pretend to solve. On that problem, I profess no belief. None is required by the Word of God, as I interpret it: none is suggested by the book of Nature. But that some men should *go* to an accursed world, sin and sinners being what they are, is no mystery. Where else can they go in a spiritual universe? That there should *be* a Hell, sin and sinners at their climax of moral growth being what they are, is no mystery. What other place is in moral affinity with them? Such a world is inevitable, in the nature of things, in a universe in which sin is embattled against God behind the ramparts of moral freedom.

That which Emerson goes out of his way to call "the vindictive mythology of Calvinism," is, in this respect, only a reprint of the theology of nature. Both are dumb before the grim facts of sin and pain. The mystery of both, a deist is as much bound to explain as I am. If he is an honest inquirer, he will confess, as I do, that the reasons why God should permit such evils to ravage the universe which He has created are beyond our comprehension. Their duration has no con-

cern with the problem. Their existence for eternity is no more inexplicable than their existence for an hour. Their being at all in the realm of an almighty and benevolent God is the insoluble mystery.

But must I therefore withhold my faith from the facts? An affirmative to this reaches a long way. If I refuse to believe every thing, the reasons of which are beyond my depth, my creed must be conveniently brief. Even the testimony of my senses can not do much for me. To a believer in the infinity of God and the finiteness of man, it can not be philosophical to be overwhelmed by the existence of difficulties in the divine administration. To cower before seeming contradictions even, is not manly. Dr. Arnold manifested the self-collection of a philosophical and manly mind, when, as his biographer describes him, "Before a confessed and unconquerable difficulty his mind reposed as quietly as in possession of a discovered truth." Such, I conceive, should be the poise of a believer in the biblical doctrine of retribution.

Dr. Paley has recorded a principle which every wise man finds use for in such researches as these. It is, in substance, that we should never suffer what we know to be disturbed by what we do not know. Bishop Butler, too,—the mind to which the Christian world owes more than to any other for the solid anchorage of faith,—lays down a law which unbelievers in the retributive teachings of

Christianity will do well to remember: "If a truth be established, objections are nothing. The one is founded on our knowledge; the other, on our ignorance."

11. You seem to me to make much — too much — of the concessions, like those which I here make, and which are often made by believers in this doctrine, to the effect that it wounds and shocks our sensibilities. Other disbelievers have done the same. So much has been said of the concessions made by the Rev. Albert Barnes, in his sermon entitled "The love of God in the gift of a Saviour," to which you refer, that I venture to say here what I believe he meant to express by those remarkable passages. They have been interpreted as evidence that in heart he did not and could not believe the dogma he professed to teach. We are told that it is too horrible for any sane man's credence, and that we know it.

Let me say, then, what I personally know of the theologic temper of believers in the doctrine, and specially that of Albert Barnes. We make concessions in good faith. We believe them to be due to candor in the argument, and to the honest convictions of unbelievers. They are entitled to all that can be fairly inferred from such concessions. We have no secret faith to shield, no mental reservations to save us from contradiction. But they do not detract from the faith we profess one whit. It is because that faith rests, as we think, on an impregnable groundwork, that we are able

to make them. To our own minds, they are an expression of our unwavering confidence. Our habit of mind on this whole class of truths is one of repose in the wisdom and rectitude of God. We believe them because we believe in God. Their unfathomable mystery we leave to Him. We believe, that, in some way, the endless suffering of endless guilt is not only consistent with, but is itself, a signal illustration of the benevolence of God. We expect one day to see this as we can not now. We do already see in part. We see that, assuming the existence of guilt as a voluntary evil, the suffering follows as an inevitable sequence, for which God is not responsible. The mystery of His permission of the guilt in His moral government, we expect under improved conditions of research in another life to be able to solve. In this *expectant* faith we rest, waiting for our Lord's appearing. We think this as reasonable, as philosophical, as the expectant faith of Leverrier, when he declared, reasoning from astronomical phenomena, that, in a certain spot in the heavens, a new star *must* one day appear. Such I have reason to know is the prevailing equipoise of mind on this subject among the vast majority of believers.

I knew Albert Barnes. I had such intimacy with him as a youthful friend has with his senior and pastor. I know that the "surprising confessions" of which you speak, were *not* indicative of any, even momentary, relaxation of his faith. He felt the same recoil of sensibility from the theology

of nature which he confessed from the biblical revelation of an endless Hell. In his theological temperament he was one of the calmest of men. His faith, as it ultimately crystallized in his mind, was evenly balanced and self-consistent. It was a crescent faith to the last. He entered on manhood with not a shred of inherited belief. He held that form of infidelity which is not the fruit of an ungodly life, to which men flee for refuge from a condemning conscience : it was the result of an honest intellectual inability to receive the current evidences of Christianity. From that point he fought his way against the redoubled forces of skeptical science, which characterized the times, till every doctrine of the biblical system had fixed itself in his mind with the authority of original discovery. He had inherited none of it. In that faith he lived and died.

Is it manly controversy to use the concessions of a candid thinker like him as proof of secret unbelief or doubt? He meant no such thing by them, and felt none. Neither do the great majority of believers in an endless punishment, when they grant in the argument the appalling nature of the truth in its bearing upon their sympathies as men. They would be less than men if they did not feel it, yet in their own estimate they would be less than Christian men if they did not believe it.

12. The difficulties of our faith in endless retribution seem immensely less to our minds than

those of disbelief. Faith in it is wrapped up in our faith in the Scriptures as a revelation from God. The doctrine is so obvious and pervasive in the New Testament, that the rejection of the one necessitates the rejection of the other. The two stand or fall together. Expurgate the doctrine wherever we find it there, and not enough would be left to be called a revelation from Heaven. The expurgations would riddle the whole of it with exceptions.

Our Lord certainly teaches the doctrine if it can be taught in human speech. I never knew an earnest educated unbeliever in the Bible, and to that extent an impartial looker-on upon our rival faiths, who did not find in it the revelation of an endless Hell. Did you? Theodore Parker found it there. Voltaire and David Hume found it there. Stuart Mill and Herbert Spencer, Strauss and Renan, have all found it there. If it is not there, human language can not contain it in intelligible words. The attempt to expurgate the Christian Scriptures of the doctrine by exegetical adroitness is without exception the most astounding example of special pleading in the history of religious controversy. Respectable science it is not. Men who believe it to be true, must have a secret fear that it is not so. As to the common readers of the Bible who come to it with no scholastic theory to defend, they have no conception of what we mean when we tell them that the doctrine of eternal retribution is not expressed in the teachings of our Lord.

Reason makes another point respecting the exclusion of this doctrine from the Scriptures. If we accept the principle of interpretation which that exclusion involves, we must find room for all its corollaries. If, then, we allow our moral instincts to explain away the retributive teachings of Christ, we must allow the moral instincts of other men to explain away any thing and every thing else to which they take exception. The Sermon on the Mount would long ago have been foredoomed by the moral instincts of Sparta. The refined idolatry of Athens would have expunged the Decalogue. The moral nature of the American aborigines would have laughed at the beatitudes. Savage intuitions the world over would have scouted St. Paul's picture of Christian charity. Not a solitary doctrine or sentiment or song or prophecy in the Scriptures which modern civilization exalts for its profound truth, or pure morality, or poetic beauty, can be named which somebody's "ethical instincts" have not denounced and hooted at.

When John Eliot first preached to the Nipmuck Indians at Nonantum the Christian theory of the forgiveness of injuries, a grunt of incredulous derision ran around the circle of his hearers as they sat before him on their haunches. The "moral intuitions" of Nipmuck culture knew better than that. On the theory here combated, the Nipmuck theology was right. Why not?

But what is a revelation worth which must

“stand and deliver” at the door of every wigwam where the Nipmuck nature in man may see fit to challenge its authority? Our moral instincts are a better guide without than with a craven revelation which may be so shorn of its dignity by every passer-by. The boar out of the wood doth waste it, and the wild beast of the field doth devour it. Coleridge very shrewdly says, “Christianity can not probably be of much worth to men who pay it no other compliment than that of calling by its name the previous decisions of their own mother-wit.” This is precisely what those do who interpolate into the Scriptures their own moral instincts in flat contradiction to the plainest records of inspiration. Better, far better, is no revelation at all than one which must be constantly confounded by the “mother-wit” of the reader.

In accepting the facts of the revelation we have, and in accepting the relief it gives to the equally inexplicable facts of nature, leaving the mysteries of both unsolved, do I not choose the faith which is infinitely the more credible, the more hopeful, the more consonant with reason and with the intimations of conscience? Faith in an infinite God, without infinite mysteries and insoluble difficulties, would be a contradiction. “A God understood is no God at all.”

13. It amazes me that you find it so difficult to believe in retributive government in the moral world when the natural world is so full of it. The logic of analogy is all one way. Where is the

solitary exception? When does Nature ever forgive? Strike at a law of nature ever so playfully, and something within it will strike back. You will get the worst of it. You may as safely play with a nest of rattlesnakes. Nature never allows herself to be insulted with impunity. You are always on your good behavior in dealing with her. She may take her time for the retaliatory blow: she is too sure of her victim to be in haste. But the blow will come, and with reduplicated force for the waiting.

Pagan theology found out long ago that the mills of the gods grind slow, but that they grind to powder. All nations have the proverb in their own way. Why should not the mills grind in the same way in the moral world? God in conscience, and God in nature, are one Being. He will not contradict in one kingdom the law He has enacted in the other. To deny it seems to me insanely unphilosophical and inconsecutive.

Besides, the fact deserves to be repeated that nature is vastly more relentless than the Scriptures in her retributive teachings. Swedenborg says that "nature makes almost as much demand on our faith as miracles do." She makes more. Her retributive dealings are harder to understand, more difficult to reconcile with the perfections of God. Not a gleam of redemptive promise do we find in the world of matter. Order and sequence there, are always the order and sequence of law, never those of remedial devices. The iron rod is never laid

aside, never broken, never bent out of plumb. It is not Calvinism that is “vindictive:” it is gravitation. If you wish to find the original of the old Greek Nemesis, you must go, not to the sacred books of Christianity, but to the volumes of modern science which treat of the laws of mechanics, of electricity, of heredity. There, if anywhere, is vengeance.

The God we worship is one God. Then, His handiwork in nature should lead us to expect the disclosure of endless penalty for endless guilt in a revelation of His moral government. If it were not there, an unanswerable presumptive argument would be established that it is *not* a revelation from heaven.

14. One thing more, and my story is ended. The use so often made of the biblical symbol of fire to make the retributive idea odious and hideous, seems to me unworthy of manly and cultured controversy. We must expect it from ignorant and passionate thinkers, but as argument it is very shallow. You and I do not need to remind each other that that symbol is not a dogmatic form of truth. The veriest tyro in biblical interpretation ought to know it. In common speech we employ the same and similar figures to express vividly similar ideas. We speak of “burning passions,” of “fiery lusts,” of “flaming anger.” We tell of a man who frothed at the mouth, or ground his teeth, in impotent rage. Our Saviour takes similar liberties with dramatic and figurative speech.

Suppose, now, that some one should report us as affirming that we saw a man roasting over a slow fire in his lusts, or showing signs of hydrophobia in his wrath. Would that be argument? He might raise a ripple of inane laughter at his conceit, but would he discredit our story?

So I take all attempts of men to render odious or ridiculous the doctrine of endless punishment by putting the symbol of fire to a use for which it was never employed by Him who originated it. In His lips it meant the most solemn and appalling reality in the history of the universe, so far as it is known to us. It meant that guilt, at its climax of finished and indurated character, involves in its own nature, and by inevitable sequence, a spiritual misery of which literal speech can give no adequate conception. It is such that no other material emblem can give us so truthful an impression of it as that of a surging sea of flame. This, if it be a reality, of which some who walk our streets, and give us daily greeting, may be in peril, is too terrific a reality to be set in the frame of burlesque. Is it not?

Very truly yours,

In the fellowship of search for truth,

AUSTIN PHELPS.

## XII.

### ENDLESS SIN UNDER THE GOVERNMENT OF GOD.

Is its existence consistent with the Divine character? On this inquiry ultimately hang all objections to the retributive teachings of the Scriptures. Obvious as those teachings are on the face of them, they will be nullified by violent and tortuous interpretations if the secret feeling of the reader is, that they are a calumny against God. As one objector expressed it in the argument, "Your God is my Devil." So long as this conception of the doctrine exists, argument is useless. The plainest assertions of the Bible go for nothing. A book, no matter what its claims to inspiration are, which ascribes Satanic character to God, its professed author, can have no force as an authority to a reasonable mind.

The question narrows itself in the last analysis to the endless existence of Sin. Suffering is not the mystery of this world. Sin is the mystery. Assume sin as the great moral fact of its history, and no suffering is inexplicable. Sin and suffering—suffering and sin—are twin factors in human destiny. Can, or will, a benevolent God create

beings—millions or one, it makes no difference—who, He knows, will sin for ever? This is the crucial question.

1. In reply, let it be observed that we do not know that the prevention of sin, under a perfect system of moral government, is possible to the power of God. In the constitution of things,—we utter a truism in saying it,—some contingencies involve contradictions. God can not decree absurdities. He can not so change the mathematical relations of numbers, that, to the human mind, twice five shall be less or more than ten. God can not so metamorphose the nature of colors, that, their relations to the human eye remaining what they are, black and white shall change places in our vision, or the sky be green, and the grass blue. God can not so transmute the pleasures of the senses, that, their nature remaining unchanged, the eye shall delight in a symphony of Beethoven, and the ear in the “Sistine Madonna.” These are changes which God is as powerless to effect as man. They involve absurdities. They bear no relation to omnipotent power.

For aught that we know, this same principle may pervade the moral universe. We live under moral government. Our chief distinction is the possession of a moral nature. Within the limits prescribed to moral freedom, a moral being, be he man or angel or devil, is as imperial in his autocracy as God is in the immeasurable range of His being. This, God has Himself ordained in the creation of

a moral universe. Moral freedom is a prerogative of godlike nobility. It is the chief thing in which man is God's image. The stellar universe is not equal in imperial dignity to one thinking, sentient, self-determining mind. Man's supreme endowment is not immortality: it is his ability to be what he wills to be, to do what he chooses to do, to become what he elects to become in his growth of ages. This ethereal faculty in man eludes analysis. Beyond the tamest of tame words, no man can define or describe it. A child can exercise it, but royal academies can not tell me what it is. It is the ultimate and superlative something which makes man a man. Without it, he would have no right to say "I." Without it, a humming-bird is his equal: with it, he is the kindred of angels.

Now, we do not know that such an imperial being, remaining sovereign of his moral freedom, autocrat of himself, creator of his own character, framer of his own destiny, can be kept under all conditions of probation from a moral catastrophe. There is more than a poet's fancy in Wordsworth's conception of "man's *unconquerable* mind." Mind is as absolute over its own act in evil as in good. From the nature of the case, therefore, it can not be proved that a being who can sin will not sin. Power to do is itself temptation to do. "The free-will tempted me,—the power to do, or not to do," says Coleridge's Wallenstein. Few men can stand on the summit of a lofty tower without a momentary sense of peril in the consciousness of power

to plunge headlong. A special police guard the Colonne Vendôme in Paris, to prevent that form of suicide. So fascinating often is the power to do an evil deed!

The same fascination is involved in the consciousness of moral freedom under the government of God. Its possibilities of good are balanced by equal possibilities of evil. Which shall become history depends on the tempted being, and ultimately on him only. His biography, in this particular, is autobiography. His own hand holds the iron pen. In the case of man, therefore, we do not know but that God could not have saved him from the fall, except by annihilating his moral freedom: or, if not that, inflicting some unknown damage, which to his moral destiny would be equivalent. True, we can not affirm that it was so; but we must prove that it was *not* so before we can reasonably charge God with wrong in the permission and punishment of incorrigible sin.

2. We do not know that the prevention of sin, under a perfect moral government, was possible to the wisdom of God. The infinite and eternal expediencies of the moral universe may have forbidden it. We do not know the interminable complications of any act of God. A moment's thought is enough to baffle us in the inquiry. Nothing that He does is unrelated. Every thing is linked by invisible chains of sequence and causation to every other thing. A sublime unity compacts together all His ways. His dominion is

imperial: one aim, one plan, one animus, rules the whole. Speaking in the dialect of human governments, one *policy* sways the universe. God never unravels His own decrees. There are no contraries and confusions in the system of things. Law here is law there. Orion does not collide with the Pleiades, and the Pleiades do not jostle Orion. One force holds all things to their grooves. "He is of one mind, and who can turn Him?"

The same unity belongs, so far as we know, to moral law. We do not know, therefore, the remote consequences of a policy chosen for the administration of one world. It may have invisible convolutions and reticulations in the history of other worlds. To have chosen the policy of prevention in the control of sin here, might have necessitated revolutionary changes elsewhere. Astronomers say that a minute less or more in the diurnal revolution of Jupiter, gravitation remaining as it is, would sooner or later fill the universe with clashing planets. A change of proportion in certain chemical elements, which now lie peacefully side by side in the bowels of the earth, would rend the globe asunder. Who can prove that there are not similar niceties of adjustment in the working of moral laws? To have prevented sin here, by any power not fatal to moral freedom, might have shattered the foundation of moral government everywhere. True, we can not affirm it, but neither can we deny it.

We reasonably ask, then, may it not have been

conceivably better that one world should have been left to voluntary ruin than that all worlds should have been void of populations of intelligent and moral beings? That some inhabitants of one such fallen world should be left unrepentant to the doom they have chosen,—is not even this a less appalling calamity than that the history of sinless worlds without number should have remained unwritten? Shall all best things in the universe be forbidden, that some may be saved from abuse?

We affirm, then, in view of such unanswerable questions, that it may not have been possible to the wisdom of God to prevent the entrance of sin and consequent retribution into the moral universe through the history of man. Infinite expediency may have been against it. True, we can not affirm that it was so; but we must prove that it was *not* so, before we can charge God with wrong in the infliction of endless retribution upon endless sin.

3. If it may not be possible to divine power, and if it may not be possible to divine wisdom, to prevent sin in a perfect moral government, then we affirm further that it may not be possible to divine benevolence. A benevolent God can do only things in their nature practicable. He can do only wise things. He can do only that which infinite power can do under the direction of infinite wisdom.

The non-prevention of sin, therefore, in this world of ours may have been the best thing which, under the conditions here existing, benevolence

could desire and plan for. Speaking after the manner of human governments, the policy of non-intervention may have been the policy of love. In other departments of God's working, that policy often assumes to our short-sighted vision frightful developments.

To accomplish, in certain contingencies, the purposes of benevolence, man must be let alone. The laws of nature must be allowed to do what they will with him. Invisible and inodorous gases in the atmosphere must poison his life-blood. Unseen tempters must be let loose upon him. Malign influences must contest the supremacy in his destiny. Individual well-being must be overborne by the fall of nations. Majorities must crush the few. Great wheels must crumple up the little wheels. Infancy and helplessness must go under the hoof of power. Above all, man's own will must often be left in moral solitude. It must work out his destiny, for weal or woe, alone. For reasons unknown, God must stand aloof, and be still, while the tragedy of life goes on. Such is sometimes the *look* of things to our bleared vision.

Now, the point of the present argument is, that this principle of *non-interference* may lie back of, and under, the non-prevention of sin. Within certain bounds, and as related to the destiny of certain races, and in certain contingencies of moral trial, to let sin alone may be the dictate of benevolence. Who can say that it is not so? To leave guilt in the awful extremity of evil, to which it naturally

gravitates by the force of its own momentum, may sometimes be the first and last and best decree of infinite benignity.

True again, reasoning from the nature of things, we can not affirm that it is so; but the fact pertinent to the present argument is, that we must prove that it is *not* so, before we can hold God unworthy in His treatment of endless guilt by the infliction of endless pain.

4. The views already advanced involve another, which demands a distinct development.

It is that we do not know that the prevention of sin is possible under that feature of God's moral government by which the universe is bound together in a community of interests like those of a human family. This is one of the devices of infinite wisdom. We have observed that God's government is a unit. It is more than this. It is a parental government. Angels and men are united in filial sympathies and affections. They are studious of the same disclosures of God. Their experiences make up one great family history. The creation, the fall, and the recovery of this world, are themes of angelic as they are of human research. The ties which bind together human and angelic destinies are the ties of one household, of which Christ is the Head. In Heaven, as pictured by St. John, angels and men unite in the same liturgic service, sing the same songs of adoration, form one devout assembly. They surround God's throne in fraternal companionship.

How many more orders of intelligence people the universe, we do not know. Analogy suggests the probability that they are practically beyond computation. Telescopic research has never found the frontier of the sidereal creation. It is incredible that so vast and complicated a system of material things is not filled, or to be filled, with moral systems of equal magnitude. We discover in the ways of God the element of aspiration. He is content only with best things. We reasonably infer, therefore, that our resplendent heavens are, or are to be, the abodes of intelligence and virtue, not of ichthyosaurs and mastodons. If so, they are, or are to be, the homes of one immense family, over which God administers a paternal government. This earth is but an infinitesimal fragment. As proportioned to the planet Jupiter alone, our globe is of the size of a pea on a circular ground three or four inches in diameter. What must be its inconceivable minuteness as compared with the whole stellar universe! Such is the probable diminutiveness of our human races in the comparison with the whole family of the Heavenly Father. Most reasonably did the Psalmist anticipate the discoveries of modern science, and exclaim, "When I consider the heavens, what is man?"

Relationships of family on a scale of such immeasurable amplitude must, speaking in human dialect, lay a heavy tax on the wisdom and benevolence of God in the administration of His laws. To a human eye, it must be an administration of

inconceivable intricacy. Reasons for and against any policy of government must be of immeasurable reach, and unfathomable depth. Problems which no human wisdom can solve, must be involved in its execution. Who, by searching, can find out God? A wise and loving father can not seek the good of one child at the cost of all the rest. The interests of all are bound up in the welfare of each, and that of each in those of all. John Quincy Adams once amended the aphorism of human government, that "it should seek the greatest good of the greatest number." "No," said "the old man eloquent:" "Government should seek the greatest good of *all*." This is pre-eminently true of God's parental government over the universal family. He can not wisely care for one being or one world without a thoughtful and parental adjustment of things to the welfare of all beings in all worlds.

The project has been suggested, as one of possible achievement in a future age, of a universal federation of all human governments by which all nations should be combined in one political brotherhood, so that standing armies and the arbitrament of war and retaliatory policies should be no more. The bare thought of such interlocking without interfusion of conflicting interests oppresses a human mind with a sense of colossal intricacy. Yet this is but a remote suggestion of what the universal government of God must be through the intimacies of one spiritual family.

We are apt to be oblivious of the immense realm of the unknown in the alliances of human history with that of other orders of intelligence. Take the fall of this world, for example. How little we know of its remote and complicated relations! What problems of mysterious import it must have started in distant places of creation! It may have sent a shock, for which the fatherly government of God must provide counteraction, to the remotest frontier of populated space. The moral destiny of Sirius and Neptune may be bound up with ours. It may be, that the prevention of sin here by the only means possible or wise under the moral economy which God has elected, would have been a work involving infinite impossibilities. To our angelic brethren, it may have seemed a perilous anomaly.

Here it should be remembered that the government of sin by any other devices than those of free-will and restrictive retribution is anomalous to a loyal conscience. Speaking as we should of the devices of human law, we should pronounce it extra-constitutional. To cherubim and seraphim it might have threatened incalculable disaster to adopt a policy which should even have the look of tampering with the liberty of a free being. The history of the nameless orders of intelligence which may fill the unknown regions of space, may have contained in its archives no precedent for it. It may not, therefore, have been congenial with any principles of moral government known to them,

and fixed in their faith. It might have been productive of a violence to the moral sense of the universe infinitely more weighty in the general scale of evil, than to have chosen the policy of non-interference in the government of one world, and to have left it to its own chosen way of guilt and desolation.

It is very true that conjectures like these open into a region of shadowy possibilities. Positive faith can not enter it one step. We do not know. Our vision is very dim. In such adventurous researches we soon come to the limit, even of conjecture. We can not affirm, therefore, that one or another of these conjectures is true. But it is very much to the purpose of the present argument, that they indicate our boundless ignorance. This they prove beyond conceivable doubt. They block up our way solid with possibilities which we must disprove; and this is the turning-point of the present argument,—that we must prove that they are *not* true, before we can hold God's government to account as unjust or inhuman because He has not saved all His intelligent creation from the endless penalties of endless guilt. The very measure of our ignorance is the measure of our reasonable faith.

5. The argument as thus far developed implies one more phase of it which is worthy of emphatic notice. We do not know that the prevention of evil in this world, and of consequent retribution in eternity, is possible under that feature of God's

government by which evil is overruled, and made the instrument of good.

This is one of the devices of infinite wisdom, which, like its source, may be infinite in the range of its working. How far it is concerned with the non-prevention of moral evil, we do not know. In certain conditions, it may be prohibitory of divine interference. Good in this world could not be what it is, but for the evil which often underlies it. Our sight into this mystery, too, is very short. Our ignorance is very dense. But we can not help seeing that the principle exists. We follow it a little way, and beyond we see that its possible range outreaches all human thought. It goes into human history laden with infinite and strange contingencies. To all appearance, it has a mysterious power of contradiction. It appears often to make evil good. It brings to pass good which overweighs a thousand-fold the evil which is used in the evolution.

This law of the greater good from the lesser evil pervades the whole kingdom of nature. Every grain of wheat that germinates in the soil illustrates it. It expands with reduplicated force in the sentient creation. Physicians say that the province of pain in the human system is one of benevolent design. Life could not long survive without its kindly ministration. "Pain," said an eminent German physiologist, "is the cry of the nerve for healthy blood." Like the cry of infancy, it is never without a reason. The whole history

of surgical science is the history of evil inflicted, that good might be enjoyed.

On the grander scale of social and national life, the same law assumes gigantic proportions. What do not civilization and commerce owe to war? The very ideal of manly character,— how could the world ever have conceived it, but for the military virtues? Eliminate from poetry and art all that these virtues have contributed, and what would be left? Strike out from the history of nations all that human suffering has done for human liberty, and where would the great nations be to-day? The world over, and through all time, good from evil, pleasure from pain, fruit from rottenness, growth from decay, strength from weakness, life from death, is the law of being. Enumerate the whole vocabulary of evil by which language expresses its varieties, and do you not find that every one has its opposite in the vocabulary of good, to which it is often tributary?

Pass over the line into the kingdom of grace. You find the same law there, in more magnificent working. God is never cheated of His purpose by the audacity of sin. Wicked men never get beyond the reach of His uses. They think not so, neither is it in their hearts. Unconsciously they serve His will in the very act of refusing. Demonized being never escapes from the hollow of His hand. He uses sin as grandly as an earthquake, and as easily as a violet. The vices of men are His instruments, though they be a flaming fire.

Tyrants create heroes; inquisitors, martyrs; devils, saints. At the foot of the cross, do we not stand dumb before the treachery of Judas? It were good for *that* man if he had never been born,—but what of the good of other men? It might have been good for this world if it had never been,—but what of its mission to other worlds? The whole heavens were darkened at the crucifixion,—but, without that event, what were the history of the universe?

We have reason to believe, therefore, that this law of the greater good from the lesser evil may enter into the reasons prevailing in the mind of God for the non-prevention of sin. We know not how far, nor to what magnitude of results. But we see so much as this,—that the usefulness of evil, as God rules and overrules it, is as legitimate as that of any other instrument of God's decrees. Its being evil does not forbid its use: the enormity of the evil does not seem to limit its use. If any law governs its instrumental value, it is, that the greater the evil, the more immense is the good extorted from its existence. The power and the wisdom of God for ever overreach and outweigh the force and the cunning of him who defies them. The wrath of man praises Him.

It is true that this principle is a two-edged sword. We can not wield it but with reverent and tremulous hands. But all great principles are two-edged swords. This one warns us off from forbidden ground. It forbids us to accuse

God's wisdom or benevolence of wrong in not saving all His intelligent creation from the catastrophe of sin and the doom of retribution. It may be that He can not do it without a sacrifice of the greater good to the lesser evil. The universe might be shorn of half its glory as a monument of God's character, if the principle of evolving good from evil were eliminated from its administration.

Again,—we concede it,—we can not affirm that these things *are* so. Our ignorance grows more dense as we penetrate farther into these conjectural researches. Does the objector urge that we *know* nothing about such themes of inquiry? We answer, "Very true; and we affirm nothing." But the very pivot of the argument is, that, because we know nothing, we must not affirm the negative of God's integrity. We must prove that certain possibilities are *not* true, before we can venture to distrust either the revelations or the silences of God. Distrust, under such conditions, is as unphilosophical as it is ungodly.

## XIII.

### THE HYPOTHESIS OF A SECOND PROBATION.

THE theory of a continued probation after death is entitled to a respectful hearing. Those who are learned in the history of doctrine affirm that this theory has never received the exhaustive discussion which has been given to other fundamental doctrines in the evolution of the faith of the Church. If so, it should receive such discussion now. Those who advocate it are entitled to our gratitude rather than our suspicion, so far as they have new truth, or new interpretations of old truth, to add to our beliefs.

Especially should we welcome any new light which may dawn upon the fearful problem of endless retribution. Fearful it is to the wisest of us. Unwavering as our faith is, we confess that it is an expectant faith, in which we wait for more light. We do not understand the mystery. We are dumb before its appalling darkness. We give the hand of welcome to any one who can help us to the light we crave. If the prospect of another probation, under conditions more favorable than those of this world, is the way out of the admitted difficulties, be it so, if it can but be proved as a

revealed, indubitable fact. It is but fair to suspend the ancient faith so far as may be needful to give to this new hypothesis a candid hearing. No authority of the ancient creeds should close the door upon progressive inquiry.

But, as the process of discussion goes on, we need to be watchful of its bearings on the *popular* belief. Re-adjustments of old beliefs are necessarily subject to perilous contingencies. In the present case, belief is founded on revelation. A revelation from God must be assumed to be a gift to the popular mind. It is not a monopoly of schoolmen. The chief claim of the Bible to superiority over the philosophy of Plato is, that it is level, in its great central ideas, to popular comprehension. It is intended to meet popular wants. If a truth is in it, the common mind can find it there. It has no contrasts of esoteric and exoteric dogmas. What it reveals to one, it reveals to all.

A strong presumption, therefore, is created against a proposed interpretation, if any one of several contingencies appears. If that interpretation can not be understood by the common mind; if it does not commend itself to the common sense; if it does not meet the religious necessities of common life; if it is of such a nature as to pervert the workings, or lower the tone, of the common conscience; if, therefore, the practical drift of it is laxative rather than tonic in its effect on the solicitudes of men respecting their eternal destiny; if all or any of these conditions accompany a pro-

posed interpretation of the Scriptures,—a strong presumption is thereby created that it is not true. This presumptive argument appears to be unanswerable against the hypothesis of a continued probation after death.

In the first place, the fact should be emphasized, that the popular mind will make no practical distinction between a *continued* probation and a *second* probation. The distinction is a real one, and the advocates of the hypothesis are fairly entitled to all that can be made of it. Among experts in theological debate, it is not fair to ignore it. But it is equally true and equally important, if not more so, that the popular mind *will* ignore it in its practical use of the doctrine. No caution of religious teachers can prevent this. The pulpit is powerless to neutralize it. Ages of settled belief have fixed in the popular theology the end of life as synchronous with the end of moral trial. All that lies beyond is a new existence. Death is the most absolute finality we know of. No other revolution conceivable in moral conditions can break the continuity of probation so radically and summarily. It impresses all minds, not prepossessed by an adverse theory, as the natural ending of *this* period of trial. If it is not such, that fact creates an anomaly in the divine order of things. Death puts an end to all other preliminaries to fixed destiny. The end is so absolute as to start painfully the inquiry whether the soul itself exists in the region beyond. Why, then, should it not put

an end to this preliminary,—the moral trial for eternity?

Practically, therefore, to the popular mind, the question concerns a second period of probationary discipline. One such period ends: does another begin? In this phase of it, we must meet the question in the pulpit. In scholastic discussion, it may take the other form, and ought to be so treated; but the pulpit must encounter it as it frames itself in the popular thought. We shall not, for any long time, hold the popular thought to any other. Discuss a continued probation in a morning's sermon, and hearers will be talking of a second probation before nightfall.

A more serious peculiarity of the discussion, and one tending to relax the popular faith, is the *hypothetical* way in which the advocates of the new departure deny the ancient belief that the end of probation and the end of life are simultaneous. “*If*,” we are told, “there are beings—infants, idiots, and some heathen—who have no fair trial in this life, they will not be denied such trial in another. *If* this world gives them no fair chance of salvation, another world will. *If* they have not known and intelligently rejected Christ here, they will not be debarred from the opportunity elsewhere. Beyond the grave, in Hades, in Paradise, in some city of refuge, in some prison of suspended destiny, such infirm souls, *if* they exist, shall find the gospel preached, and salvation offered.” The corollary follows inevitably, that prayer for such

“spirits in prison” is not forbidden. Tacitly it is encouraged.

We pass over, for the present, the startling revolution which this novel theology proposes in the ancient theory, so dear to bereaved parents, of the destiny of those who die in infancy. The point which demands review, is that this hypothetical way of holding in suspense the ancient faith is fraught with peril. To a scholarly mind, in matters which are proper themes of scholastic debate, a hypothesis may be a very harmless thing. It may be a very necessary device in the initial stage of discussion. It is not such to the common mind, in matters of grave practical faith. Minds unused to speculative theology may find it difficult to deny a hypothesis so plausible as the one now in hand. They may not easily see where the fallacy lies. If two and two do not make four, they may make five. Why not? Yet the hypothesis loosens the whole basis of mathematical demonstration. So, in the case now before us, the fallacy lies in the fact that the hypothesis contradicts known and indubitable truth. It loosens the foundation of much more than the truth in question.

Apply the hypothetical method to truths not susceptible of demonstration, and to the common mind it may be revolutionary in its effect. It is likely to carry the force of assertion. Popular thinking does not hold truth long in solution. A precipitate is soon formed of positive belief or unbelief. Discourse in the hypothetical vein will

soon be believed to affirm more than it does affirm. We shall be understood to deny more than we do deny. When confronted with the perils of our teaching, we may honestly shelter ourselves behind our hypotheses. Logically they protect us from the charge of error, because they affirm nothing. But the popular mind does not follow us to our retreat. We shall be quoted as holding a secret faith. That which we hold suspended on an "if," the common mind will hold in downright affirmation. The common sense of men is not diplomatic. It does not hold beliefs in reserve or in balance with provisos. It does not handle truth with silken gloves.

Furthermore, on the subject of retribution the popular faith is quick to seek shelter from the terrific forms of inspired speech. If a chance is opened for escape from the old belief with a respectable show of scholarly authority, men spring to it. In the biblical forms we utter our faith in low and tremulous tones. It requires but a little impulse of doubt from trusted religious teachers, first to remand our belief into silence, and then to substitute for it more than the hypothetical negation. Men will deny on this theme more than their teachers deny: they will believe on the negative side more than their teachers believe. Such is the drift of the popular thinking. The descent from an old, high-toned, outspoken, uncompromising type of the truth to a practical suspension, ending in a flat denial, is very facile. The road is

very smooth, made so by the tread of many feet. It needs often but the suggestion from a revered instructor of the hypothetical negative to invite the unwary to a surrender of faith.

In few things is the superlative wisdom of inspiration, and especially that of our Lord, more obvious than in the unmitigated, peremptory, absolute revelation of eternal woe. In nothing does inspiration disclose more strikingly its prospective bearing in looking onward to after-times, and fore-stalling objections created by the effeminate sentiment of ages to come. The revelation of retributive purposes from the lips of our Lord is the divine *ultimatum*. In His imperative speech, the truth is relieved by no hypothesis to the contrary. It is diluted by no hint of exceptions. The eternal prospect is lighted up by no possibilities of reprieve. Compromise and proviso are forestalled. The great gulf is fixed. The uttermost farthing shall be exacted. This is preaching great truth in great speech. No other way of putting the stern reality will ever hold the popular mind to it as a reality. Relax its severity, and you destroy its tenacity. Give men the inch, and they will take the ell. Make the error possible, and they will make it sure. Hypothesis will be assertion, and plausibility will be proof.

Probably not an ungodly man lives who does not believe, that, if there are to be any exceptions to the doom of incorrigible guilt, his own case will be one of them. Men trust to luck in this thing

with awful temerity. They find some overbearing of temptation, some infelicity of circumstance, some force of ancestral impulse, some tyranny of temperament, which will create, if not in eternal justice, yet in the magnanimity of God, a way for their escape from the threatened penalty of sin. In some way or other the elastic "If" can be made to cover a fair chance of salvation for them, whatever may be the luck of worse men.

Such is the pagan theology on the subject which finds currency in the world. Indeed, is it not the fact, that, to the majority of us all, crimes are worse in other men than in ourselves? Few men weigh themselves with their fellows in even scales. Do we not count it an exceptional virtue if a man is as severe in self-judgment as in the criticism of others? A subtile breath generally tilts the balance in our favor. Here, therefore, lies imminent and deadly peril in the preaching of hypothetical faith on a truth so appalling to the sensibilities, and so overpowering to the self-love, of men, as that of an eternal Hell.

We may perhaps obtain some conception of this perilous tendency by extending this hypothetical style of teaching to others of the central doctrines and duties of our religion. Why not, as pertinently as to this one? Express in this style the doctrine of depravity. *If* there are beings, such as infants, idiots, and some heathen, who, by reason of constitutional infirmity or unfortunate conditions, are not susceptible of moral government,

such as Christianity represents, then the government of God *may* not cover them at all in the range of its requirements and sanctions. *If* there are men, women, children, who, by reason of their amiability of temperament or the innocence of youth, are not subject to the disabilities of the Fall, then the law of God does not rest upon them as being in the bondage of sin. The Word of God does not admonish them as lost beings who need to be saved. At least this *may* be true. We "must not dogmatize" to the contrary.

Apply this dubious method of speech to the doctrine of regeneration. *If* there are men of culture, and women of refinement, and children of a godly ancestry; and if to these are to be added scholars, philosophers, scientists, statesmen, whom a Christian civilization has elevated and rounded in the virtues and amenities of life, so that their moral deficiencies seem insignificant, their faults venial, their sins invisible to the world's eye,—then they do not, or *may* not, stand in need of moral renewal by supernatural power. *If* there are some such elect spirits among hearers of the gospel, the Christian pulpit can not fairly treat them as dead in trespasses and sins. They can not reasonably be counted as habitants of a lost world, by nature the children of wrath, and needing to be born again. They constitute, as many such believe of themselves, an intermediate class between saints and sinners, of whom the drift of biblical teaching seems to take no cognizance. At the best, this

*may* be so. We must submit to a suspense of faith till we can prove that it is not so. Preaching on this doctrine, instead of presenting a solid front as the ages of faith have believed, must be riven through and through by its exceptions.

Subject to the same strain of hypothesis the doctrine of the Atonement. *If* there are favored classes of the human brotherhood, in which sin itself takes on aspiring and beautiful and heroic forms, so that they become the theme of eulogium and song, which carry the implication that sin in such forms does not need to be washed away by the atoning blood of Christ, then it follows that of such beings Christ is not a Saviour. *If* there are such men and women, the corollary is, that they do not depend on the sacrifice of an infinite and sinless One to shield them from the wrath of an indignant God. Such elect ones are not required to look upon themselves as saved by grace, and grace only.

An English nobleman once said, that to him the most incredible thing in Christianity was, that, in the conditions of salvation, it makes no distinction between the noble and the base of human birth. Napoleon spoke in the same strain. Said he, "For my part, it is not the mystery of the incarnation which I discover in religion, but the mystery of social order which associates with heaven the idea of equality." How can the hypothetical theology answer him? It must at least be conceded that his objection *may* be unanswerable. It will not

do for us to affirm that it is not so. "We must not dogmatize." Hypothetical wisdom sets all things sailing in a beautiful mist in mid air.

Carry this style of hypothetical negation into the discussion of inspiration. How does it sound from a Christian pulpit? Moses, though lifted above his age in his religious intuitions, was still a Hebrew of the Hebrews. When he, honestly perhaps, read prophecy backward, and experimented upon the age of the world and the order of its birth, *if* he took Hebrew legend for revelation, and was sadly out in his reckoning; *if* he really knew no more about it than other men who had dreams, and saw strange sights; and *if* science convicts him of that ignorance and presumption,—then we must roll up the parchment of Genesis, and store it in the library of myths. Our respect for Mosaic inspiration must keep it company.

St. Paul believed, honestly enough, that it was given him to see things which it was not lawful for man to utter. Yet he was a Jew. He dragged behind him the crudities of a race to whom science was unknown, and in whose ethics art was a sin. *If*, therefore, he at one time believed in good faith that he saw the end of the world close at hand, and said it, and if a month or two later he declared in faith not so good that he never said that, we must, then, treat him as we would any other blundering prophet, in whose reckoning the end of the world has not come to time. His claim to inspired authority must pass for what

it is worth. The popular mind will make quick work with it.

*If* an inspired Psalmist uttered very worldly imprecations; *if* he cursed his enemies roundly, like other exasperated men; *if* inspired lawgivers commanded things abhorrent to the moral sense of mankind; *if* even our blessed Lord pictured retribution in panoramic horrors, which our ethical instincts recoil from as contradictory to the character of God,—then we must let go the record of psalmist and lawgiver and of the most godlike of teachers. We must hold our notions of inspiration with so loose a hand, that our own reason shall at least be its equal, and our moral intuitions vastly its superior. In the ultimate evolution of the argument, we must at least concede that this *may* be true. “It will not do for us to dogmatize” to the contrary.

Once more apply this style of hypothesis and possible negation to the adjustments of the pulpit and the revision of creeds. *If* Christianity itself uplifts some portions of the race, possibly some entire generation in a golden age, to such a height that culture does for them what grace, and grace only, can do for others, then these select ones do not, or *may* not,—we do not know, and dogmatizing is out of place,—*may* not be proper objects of the preaching of the gospel in its ancient types. It must be reconstructed to meet their advanced thinking. It must be mellowed to suit their delicate sensibilities. They must not be disgusted

by its ancient horrors. The sterner elements of it must be eliminated. The poet was right who sang of a place which “must not be named to ears polite.” The old creeds must be woven anew of more facile stuff. Love must take the precedence of Law. Silk must take the place of steel. The pulpit of the coming age must be attuned

“To the Dorian mood  
Of flutes and soft recorders.”

Even now the new dispensation may be at the door: who can tell?

Ring the changes of these hypothetical negations through the whole gamut of revealed truth, and what must be the working upon the whole *tone* of the pulpit? How long could the popular faith stand that style of doctrinal discussion? How long could any thing stand in the popular theology which could deserve a biblical nomenclature? How long could the faith of the wisest and the best of us bear the strain? A man’s real faith is the residue which his doubts leave intact. Hypothetical beliefs are beliefs suspended. Life can not use them as factors in achievement. Character can not appropriate them as elements of growth. In war, no territory is so severely ravaged as the neutral ground. So is it with beliefs which are made the pendants of an “If.”

Why should the doctrine of retribution be subjected to such neutrality more than the cognate doctrines of our religion? No other element in

our system of faith bears tampering with so poorly as this. The popular mind must hold it with close grip, or it can not long hold it at all. It never can live subject to the law of chances. Men must hear in it the old apostolic ring of unquestioning and unqualified speech. Only when we “*know the terrors of the Lord,*” can we “persuade men.”

One fact more is conclusive evidence of the peril of this way of putting things in our expositions of the ancient faith. It is, that its hereditary enemies exult in this novel departure. General Grant said of the battles of the Wilderness, “Where the enemy does not want me, there they must find me.” The converse principle is pertinent in theological controversy. That is perilous to the faith which its enemies delight in. We can not afford to preach it in ways which are a boon to unbelief. We should be wary of qualifications and provisos which are welcomed by the whole unbelieving world. Yet when in the history of the New-England Theology has such a greeting been given with such loud and general acclaim by its opponents as that which has applauded this hypothetical teaching of a second probation? The theological successors of Dr. Channing have joined hands with those of Dr. Ballou and of Theodore Parker in a triangular benediction upon the discoverers of this new theory of the future life. It is hailed by them all as a sign that the last days of the faith of the fathers are at hand. A wise man will watch what his enemies say of him.

Mr. Emerson admits that the Calvinistic theology — mythology, he calls it — has great tenacity of life. He says it will be the last to die of the ancient beliefs. So it will. But we have only to put its massive pillars into the stock and structure of hypotheses, to see them topple over before their time. Errors develop themselves in systems as truths do. As one truth ushers another into the general faith, so does one error lead to a system of errors in which each one is a prop to the rest. One error never stands long alone. Especially in the derivation of beliefs from a divine revelation, to extort an error from it requires a theory of inspiration which undermines the whole. This is the result to be feared by the friends, and this is the result hoped for by the enemies, of our faith. The disintegrating process may be very rapid. An innocent hypothesis may in the twinkling of an eye be the ruin of a system.

## XIV.

### SCHOLASTIC THEORIES OF INSPIRATION.

OURS is the religion of a Book. The inspiration of the Book is, therefore, to the popular faith especially, a necessity. No other Christian truth reaches so far underground. Yet the drift of what may be called scholastic as distinct from popular opinion concerning it, in recent years, has tended strongly to take the doctrine out of the range open to popular inquiry, and to remand it to speculations in which only cultured minds, and to some extent only professional minds, are interested. In some quarters, the result is a change amounting almost to revolution. What, then, do we need to find in the doctrine of Inspiration to make it effective in the theology of the people?

First, We need a theory of inspiration which is easily understood. A theory packed full of critical distinctions and of qualifications not easily intelligible, except to educated minds, is not the theory needed by the common mind. It will not long hold the common mind. It is not a practicable theory, therefore, for the uses of the pulpit. All Christian history shows that the masses of a Christianized nation must have the idea of inspira-

tion, if at all, in clear forms of statement, and supported by obvious methods of proof. With the people, inspiration is that or nothing. The moment that you involve the doctrine in intricate forms, or obscure its proof by wary reserve in argument which suggests more doubt than faith, or suspend its integrity on nice points of criticism which invite interminable conflicts of learning, you take it out of the range of the moral sympathies of the people. It slips out of keeping with their sense of moral need. They no longer see in it a truth which fits in to their condition. Men of the common mold will say of such an involuted and nicely balanced theory, "That may do for men of learning, but it contains no help for me." Human nature in the average craves another vision.

We need, also, in a working theory of inspiration, something which makes the authority of the Scriptures imperative. We must have the doctrine in a bold and decisive form. Plain men must be able to carry it from the pulpit to their homes, and trust it with a sense of assurance in their devotional reading of their Bibles. On such a subject, men will not long believe a doctrine which they can not *use*. Indeed, it is suspiciously noticeable, that even experts in biblical learning are sometimes burdened with learning overmuch on the subject. They are apt to flounder when they attempt to define a very "liberal" and scholastic notion of inspiration in few words. They seem

to be tongue-tied by fear of believing too much. One modern expert of this class declares that such are the complications and qualifications of the doctrine, that it can not be truthfully stated in exact language. That is a disastrous concession to infidelity.

The late Rev. Starr King, D.D., of Boston, once illustrated, in his own person, the same peril. He had just preached a sermon on the doctrine, which was eminent for almost every quality of scholarly discourse except those of clear statement and positive faith. Among his hearers was his neighbor and friend, the late Rev. Nehemiah Adams, D.D. As they left the church, arm in arm, Dr. Adams said to him, in substance, "Dr. King, your sermon leaves me in doubt as to what you mean when you call the Bible inspired. Will you explain to me what your idea of inspiration is?" — "Yes," said Dr. King substantially: "I think I have a satisfactory notion of it, and it is just this: inspiration is—it is—hm!—it is a kind of mental uplifting; it is an illumination; it is—well, it is an *inspiration* of the whole man."

This may do for minds like that of Dr. King; but it will never do for the plain Christian believer, who feels the need of a revelation from God which is authoritatively *God-like*. Plain men, when in earnest in religious inquiry, incline to believe much rather than little. They are, by stress of their necessities, believers, not doubters. They need a conception of inspiration which shall make

the Bible resonant with the very voice of God. It must be something which the soul can hear in the far distance, when conscious of estrangement from its Maker. It must give visions of truth which men can see in the dark. Nothing less authoritative than this is the inspiration needed to commend the religion of a Book to a lost world. Lost men need a voice which can find them.

A fact supremely vital to the doctrine in question is that proof of *any* revelation must start with the inquiry, "Does man need a revelation?" If we need none, the presumption is that we have none. This presumption is irrefutable by any ulterior reasoning. God is not a God of waste. Even Socrates grounded his belief that a teacher *must* come from God, on the simple fact that the world was in so bad a plight without one. Does it not plainly follow, that the theory of inspiration here combated knocks out from under it the initial argument in proof of any revelation? For the only revelation it supports is *not* the revelation we need. We need an authority. We need an obvious authority, an imperial authority, an authority from which there is no appeal. We need a clear light shining in a dark place. We need something which shall illumine blinded eyes, and be audible to deafened ears. A revelation which in the very groundwork of its claims multiplies our questionings, and reduplicates our doubts, is *not* the revelation we need. Therefore the presumption is conclusive, that it is not the revelation we have received.

Another element needed in a working-theory of inspiration, is that it shall be one which shall comprehend in its scope the entire Scriptures in their moral and religious teachings.

The assertion that “the Bible *contains* the Word of God” is amphibious. It belongs to two widely diverse realms of thought. It is true, or it is false, according to its occult meaning. The Bible is a unit. In its unity lies the climax of its purpose and its power. That unity can not be broken with impunity to the fragments. The whole or nothing is the Word of God. A revelation supported by *intermittent* authority, inspired in patches and parentheses, we may be very sure is not a revelation, either of God or from God. Its structure is not God-like. Its errors infuse a baleful suspicion through its very truths. Whose is the prerogative to sit in judgment for us, and tell us where error ends, and truth begins? We grope at noon-day as in the night.

The “higher criticism,” for instance, in some of its vagaries, claims to prove to us that St. Paul spoke truth in one epistle, and contradicted it in another. What, then, is St. Paul to us, more than Swedenborg? The same wisdom teaches us that Moses was inspired to construct the Hebrew jurisprudence, but not inspired to record his vision of the history of creation. Who, then, is Moses to us, more than Confucius? As a historian of the divine cosmogony, he is not so much as an expert in modern geology. Again, we are instructed that

our Lord, in giving His sanction to the Jewish faith of His day in the Old-Testament Scriptures, meant only to lend His authority to the Messianic Psalms and a few historic and biographic fragments, and left the rest to the learned and destructive criticism of future times. He is made to appear as if His main object in His use of the ancient Scriptures were to fend off their impositions on modern faith. Is not the sequence inevitable, that the major part of the Old Testament to-day, and to us, has no more moral authority than the Vedas? Whether it has as much, what means has the unlettered mind of knowing? Such a revelation can not live in the trust and the affections of common men. It has no place in the homes of the people. It must retire to the upper shelves of scholastic libraries, or be locked in the Vatican behind oaken doors. Sooner or later it must go into oblivion with the sacred books of other mythologic and obsolete theologies.

To teach effectively the religion of a Book which is progressive in its construction, we must have a volume which is *one* in its system of moral ideas. It must be a *structure* in which every part gravitates to a center. It must be written by men who knew that whereof they affirmed, and who, consciously or unconsciously, wrote under the direction of one controlling Mind. In their religious teachings, they must have made no mistakes, and not written by guess-work. They must not have contradicted each other or themselves. The earlier

writers must have been forerunners to the later; and, in the end, there must be a *fulfillment* of divine plan which shall throw back a light upon the beginning. An epic poem or a tragedy is not more truly a structure, compact and one, than we have reason to expect a progressive revelation to be which shall express to men of all ages the mind of God.

On the other hand, a theory of inspiration, of which the final outcome is that Moses contradicted Christ, that the imprecations of David conflict with the Epistles of St. John, and that St. Paul could not even repeat himself correctly, abrogates all claim of the Scriptures to imperative and divine authority. God has not thus contradicted God. He has not given to such a world as this a volume through which runs no golden thread of truth unbroken. That He has given to a lost world a book inspired here, and not inspired there, historic now, and mythic then, blundering sometimes, and by hap right at other times, and that He has left it to man's infirm intuitions to divine whether it is oracular anywhere, is absurd. It is not like God to build such a rickety structure.

Nor is it like man to interpret such a volume truthfully. The uncultured mind especially can not solve the riddle of such a book. The principles of its interpretation are too recondite, and the result too dubious. Under the intellectual infirmities induced by sin, man can not by any skill in mental *ricochet* pick out the inspired frag-

ments from such a medley of fable. Whatever may be true of the cultured few, the many would flounder through its pages as in a quagmire. What else could the vast majority of men do with it, but to give it up,—some in contempt, and some in despair? Socrates, when he prayed that a teacher might be sent from God, craved no such revelation as this. In all soberness, would not Cicero be as valuable a teacher of immortality? Would not Marcus Aurelius be a better guide to a manly philosophic life? The book of Nature surely would be infinitely superior to such a Book of God.

The views here advanced are further enforced by another fact. It is, that we need in our theory of inspiration to find an adaptation to men who are undergoing the discipline of probation. One thing seems to be often strangely overlooked in discussions of this and kindred doctrines. It is, that man here is in no ideal world. Life is too severe a strain upon his physical and moral nature to leave him mental force enough to settle for himself the interminable questions to which scholastic theories of such doctrines give rise. We need in such a life a revelation from God and of God which shall speak its own authority. That authority must be such that ignorant men can be made to understand it. Men not trained in schools must be able to see the reason for it. Men burdened by life's discipline must be able to take it home to life's emergencies.

The argument for the evidences of Christianity, which has for ages commanded the faith of believers, is mainly that derived from the response of the Christian heart to the Bible as a revelation from God. We believe it because it is such a revelation as we need, and such as it is like God to give. We have thus claimed that the Bible *does* speak for itself. The unlettered mind has credible evidence of its divinity, without harassing itself with the scholastic side of the proof. This evidence we can not afford to surrender. Yet we are in danger of losing it in the complications of criticism on the subject of inspiration, which suggest more qualifications than principles, more exceptions than rules. We need the doctrine, its statement and its proofs, in such forms as shall commend both to common men in common life.

In the shock of overwhelming sorrows, when men's need is sorest, and their mental force exhausted, they must be able to find God everywhere present in the Book, without the drawback of misgivings, lest it be mistaken here, and fabulous there, and perhaps absolute nowhere. Sick men must be competent to find comfort in it, and tempted men to find strength, and dying men peace, without abatement by reason of doubts of its authority.

All these uses of the Book are impracticable to the extreme of absurdity, if the best and only revelation we have is one which has for its chief aim to put us on treble guard against believing too

much. We are in no condition to be so morbidly shy of faith. We are in a wretched plight indeed, if our only medium of converse with God plunges us all into the vortex of scholasticism, and leaves us there, to find out by our own distempered vision what inspiration is, and where it is, and how much it covers with authority, and how much with doubt, and how it gets along with its own inconsistencies and blunders. Of all men most miserable are we, if, in response to our despairing cry for help, God has given us a revelation, in which, when we sum up the whole of it, and cast the balance of its teachings, we must find more to reject than to believe, more to foster doubt than faith, more to start new despairs than to relieve old ones. Such a revelation, be it repeated, is *not* the revelation which a lost world needs. Therefore the presumption is beyond rebuttal, that such is *not* the revelation we have received.

## XV.

### THE NEW-ENGLAND CLERGY AND THE ANTI-SLAVERY REFORM.

#### PART I.

IN every great revolution of opinion, three classes of men are the chief belligerents. They are the resists, the destructives, and the reformers. The resists are the men who hold on to things as they are. They resist change because it is change. The destructives are the men who would break up society itself to get rid of its abuses. They are the men of one idea. The reformers are men of balanced ideas who look before and after. They are tolerant of evils which are curing themselves. They labor patiently for bloodless revolutions.

With these distinctions in mind, it is not difficult to classify the men who were eminent in the war of antislavery opinion, thirty to fifty years ago. The proslavery men were resists. They resisted, not only the liberty of the black man, but almost every thing else which a free people value. Free speech, a free press, a free postal-service, free soil, free pulpits, free schools, they resisted as

stoutly as free negroes. The very word "free" was a bugbear to their fancy in the daytime, and a nightmare to their dreams.

The Abolitionists, technically so called, were destructives. They were honest, outspoken men, who made no secret of their aim to destroy the Union of these States. The national Constitution, in their amiable dialect, was a "covenant with hell." Their code of ethics was sublimely simple and compact. They saw no difference between an individual and an organic wrong. Wrong was wrong. That was the end of argument. What was left to argue about? A wrong interlaced with, and grown under, the traditions, the usages, the laws, the institutions, and the wills of thirty millions of independent minds, must be treated as if it were the whim of one. A wrong inherited centuries ago was to be no more patiently dealt with than a wrong enacted yesterday. They therefore trusted nothing to the slow foot of time. Institutions which had taken ages in the building, must be revolutionized in a night. Their theory took the whole subject of American slavery out of the domain of practical statesmanship, and consigned it to the conscience of a child.

As in all other developments of fanatical reform, a vein of malign passion ran side by side with much that was noble through their theories and policies and speech. In debate, their habit was abusive as opposed to suasive. The singleness of their aim gave them the power which all earnest

men have, who are not trammelled by qualified convictions. The opinions of most men are probabilities. Theirs were certainties, absolute in evidence, and imperial in authority. They were passionate thinkers, who talked right on, and acted as they talked.

So much as this must be admitted for them : they had a sylvan robustness of thought which impelled them to say what they meant, and to go straight to their objects. If they had talked less about their honesty of purpose, and truth of speech, one would give them credit for more of both. But, in the main, they were loyal to their thought. They believed in themselves, and trusted their own intuitions against the world. It would be a libel to question their sincerity.

It is not a libel to say that the intensity of their convictions on the slavery question was not all the intensity of conscience. It was, in part, the fury of dissent. Conscientious men are apt to be tempestuously conscientious if they have something to hate. George Ripley, the accomplished president of the “Brook Farm,” said of one of that eccentric household, “He would hoe corn all day, Sunday, if I would let him ; but all Massachusetts could not make him do it on Monday.” The conscience of reform has a double nature. One-half of it is the iconoclasm of dissent. So it was with the leaders of abolitionism in New England.

It was in keeping with their temper, that they should avowedly, and on principle, fling the chief

weight of their cause upon the power of invective. Argument was secondary, because conclusions were foregone. They made a study of denunciation as of a fine art. A new epithet of vituperation, or figure of objurgatory speech, was to their dialect like a new rifle to an arsenal. The author deserved a patent for it. When Mr. Garrison had hatched overnight, in his inventive brain, a new lampoon upon the American Church, Marlborough Chapel resounded with it the next morning. He orated with beaming smile about the Church as “the spawn of hell.” Then the few scores of listeners on the floor were titillated in sympathy.

Those were rare days for studying the art of eloquence in its failures. Probably history does not contain an example of another body of men, possessed of a fair average of brains, and some of them of culture, and led by one man who belonged to the supreme rank of modern rhetoricians rather than orators (for orators win their audiences: Wendell Phillips seldom did), who on the platform practiced so little tact in dealing with men, or who threshed the mother tongue so ferociously in the dialect of abuse. They were destructives in their theories of government; they were destructives in their measures of policy; they were destructives in their judgments of institutions and of public men; they were destructives in their style of debate.

Their magnetism drew into alliance with them, as that of such men always does, sympathetic de-

structives of every stripe and color. To a looker-on, it seemed as if all the "cranks" on the continent were drawn in invisible grooves to the platform of abolition. Divorced women could talk there of the tyranny of the marriage laws; beardless boys could expose there the blunders of Moses and the barbarism of the Old Testament; socialists could expound there the inhumanity of property in land; laborers on a strike could denounce there the despotism of capital; "Come-outers" could recite there in sing-song the corruption of the Church; and "Father Lampson," a harmless lunatic, who, with his snath bereft of blade, personated "Old Time," could denounce there the crimes of Scribes and Pharisees. In short, every bee in everybody's bonnet had a chance to hum there. If a long-haired man had a revelation from heaven against the sin of short hair, and a short-haired woman had her dispatch against the crime of long hair, both could join hands there lovingly, and have their say out. This is a caricature, but it is a caricature of real life.

That it is so, is confirmed by a description given by Ralph Waldo Emerson of a similar assemblage, of which he was himself a member, in which figured the majority of those who were leaders in those days of the antislavery reform. He says, "If the assembly was disorderly, it was picturesque. Madmen, madwomen, men with beards, Dunkers, Muggletonians, Come-outers, Groaners, Agrarians, Seventh-day Baptists, Quakers, Aboli-

tionists, Calvinists, Unitarians, and Philosophers,—all came successively to the top."

The "picturesqueness" of the abolitionist assemblies reminded a spectator of Edmund Burke's celebrated caricature of Lord Chatham's coalition ministry. "He made an administration so checkered and speckled, a piece of joinery so crossly indented and whimsically dovetailed, such a tessellated pavement without cement, here a bit of black stone, and there a bit of white, patriots and courtiers, Whigs and Tories, who had never spoken to each other in their lives until they found themselves, they knew not how, pigging together in the same truckle-bed."

To a good-natured looker-on, who had strolled in on a May morning,—a country parson, perhaps, who sought recreation in hearing himself castigated, and in finding out what a crimsoned sinner he was,—there were two redeeming features of the show. One was the bland, fatherly smile of William Lloyd Garrison in the chair. He was at heart a benignant man; and his look seemed to overflow with the oil of human kindness, at the very moment when his speech was as the oil of vitriol. Like Isaak Walton's angler, he hooked his worm "as if he loved it." The good of that to the worm was not so obvious, but that was the way of it. The other was the grand and stirring songs of the "Hutchinson Family." They were the bugle-call of freedom. For downright anti-slavery effect, they were worth all the rest put

together. They made one's heart swell with sympathy for the slave till it was big enough to lift the roof off. The philippic from the platform went in at one ear, and out at the other. The song lived in one's soul for many a day.

Between these two extremes in the conflict of the century stood the genuine reformers. These constituted the great bulk of the thinking minds of the North who gave to the subject reflection enough to have serious convictions about it. In this immense intermediate class stood the vast majority of the clergy—well, for the want of a more exact dividing-line, we will say—north of a line running zigzag westward from New-York City, and following northward the Atlantic coast. And foremost of these were the clergy of New England.

Mr. Webster never uttered a truer word than when he told the Senate of the United States that hostility to slavery was born in the religion of his constituents. It was their ancestral birthright. They drank it in with their mother's milk. They breathed it in the atmosphere of their Sunday schools and their family prayers. They were taught it in the thoughtful sermons of their pulpits, and in the masterly decisions of their courts. They sang it on Thanksgiving and Fast Days, and in the ballads of the farm and the workshop. Even the doggerel of "Yankee Doodle," by its associations with Independence Day and Bunker Hill, had become their festal song of liberty. No

power of suasion or of force could change the convictions of such a people. President Lincoln spoke the intuition of the New-England mind from its cradle when he said, "If slavery is not wrong, nothing is wrong." So believed, and on that belief acted, the churches and clergy of these Eastern States.

There were exceptions. But these owed their notoriety chiefly to the paucity of their numbers, to the contrast of their opinions with the back-ground of public sentiment, and to the fact that they had no perceptible influence on the general mind. Outside of the Episcopal Church, we can not recall a dozen names in the entire clergy of New England, of men eminent in position and in character, who held proslavery views. We may safely venture the guess, that more than half of the dozen, if they could be found, would have pocketed in silence the "Fugitive-slave Law," if a hunted negro had come to them at midnight, begging for food and a hiding-place. One of the curious psychological phenomena of those times was, that good men could be proslavery in theory, yet antislavery at heart. The Rev. Nehemiah Adams, D.D., the author of "The South Side View," never could understand why men called him an advocate of slavery. He considered himself as honest an antislavery man as any of us. So true is it that

"Man sees not what he seems to see:  
He seems not what he is."

The political opinions of that small group of clergymen carried no weight with the rank and file of the New-England churches. The Rev. Dr. Lord of Hanover, president of Dartmouth College, was one of the few Northern preachers who found in the Bible the enslavement of the black man as the law of the ages. This theory he honestly advocated for thirty years. It was one of a group of pessimistic notions which he elaborated with great learning and ingenuity. He backed them up by a personal character of unquestioned force and rare purity. Yet near the end of his life, when he came to record his farewell message to the world, he confessed that his thirty years of faithful teaching had not resulted, so far as he knew, in the conversion to his views of a single mind outside of his own kindred.

So it was everywhere. Proslavery opinions fell stillborn from the New-England press. They found unresponsive or indignant hearers from New-England pulpits. The pulpits were few that ventured to proclaim them. As to other literature, where on the broad earth is there a proslavery poem or drama or history, or so much as a ballad fit to be sung by a milkmaid? The world sings liberty, never servitude.

A story went the round of ecclesiastical gossip in those days, which illustrates the popular estimate of the intellectual force which gravitated into the antislavery ranks among the clergy. Two parishioners in a metropolitan congregation

were discussing the merits of a certain candidate for their vacant pulpit. They were resistsants in their polities. Said one, respecting the popular candidate, "I don't want him: I am told that he is an abolitionist."—"Well," said his friend in reply, "I have made up my mind, that in these times we have got to have an abolitionist or a fool." To men of that stripe, all antislavery ministers were abolitionists. The story loses somewhat of its piquancy by the expurgation of certain expletives which were in the original. But it illustrates where the popular judgment looked to find the men of *weight* in the clerical profession. The candidate was Rev. Dr. Stone of the Park-street Church, Boston.

It must be conceded that the Christian sentiment of reform at that time varied greatly in intensity. Some men were at tropic heat, others in a cooler zone. Good men differed in their policies. They were not agreed as to the limits of Northern responsibility for Southern wrong. Especially, they were not at one respecting the duty of benevolent societies, chartered and holding funds for other purposes, to bear public testimony against the national sin. We have no word of apology to utter for those *adroit* societies whose mission under their charter laid upon them the duty of speech, and whose diplomatic voice was silent. Silence, then, was more than speech: it was connivance at wrong. Let it receive from impartial history the verdict it deserves! No word of ours shall gloss

or lighten it. But what we claim is this,—that those differences were but surface-currents. Like other surface-currents, they took on at the time the look and the dignity of the tides; but they were *not* the tides. They never represented the great deeps of New-England thought.

Looking back to those times, now that the long agony is over, it is easy to see that God was moving more rapidly than men were. He was moving in the whirlwind, we in the evening zephyr. We can see now, that had we all felt more intensely, and spoken more imperatively, and acted more aggressively, we still should not have kept pace with the swift-footed angel of revolution.

But the fact, vital to the present purpose, is that the great undercurrent of Christian opinion was moving in only one way. The great deeps were agitated to but one purpose. They massed themselves as with the volume of the sea against the great national crime. They were crowding it steadily to its doom. If the movement did not equal in velocity that of the providence of God, still it was in profound sympathy with that.

Moreover, it represented, on the ethical side of the conflict, the only movement which was so grounded in temperate opinions, and conducted by practical wisdom, as to encourage hope of accomplishing any thing but the horrors of civil war. The religious mind of New England was a substantial unit in its aim at a *peaceful* abolition of slavery. Its convictions were outspoken, and fore-

most in their expression were the New-England ministry. The charge which is now sometimes made, either in ignorance or in malice, that the New-England pulpit was craven and time-serving on the subject, is libelous. Nobody who knows those times well, really believes it. It is worthy only of that acrid class of minds who are best known as "minister-haters."

We find proof of the position here claimed for our clergy in the volumes upon volumes of Fast Day and Thanksgiving sermons which accumulated all through that half-century. Confirmatory evidence appears in the records of our ecclesiastical associations. Those, year after year, bore solemn testimony against the crime which threatened the life of the Republic. Then, as the conflict deepened, and to him whose ear was near the underground of society the roar of artillery boomed from the near future, we see three thousand and fifty of the clergy of New England, led, I believe, by the reverend editor of "*The Congregationalist*," entering their protest as ministers of God against the iniquity before the United-States Senate. That protest would have had the names of nine-tenths of the New-England ministry, if there had been time to collect them.

The significance of that testimony may be measured by the wrath with which it was resented. Senator Douglas was astute enough to see in it the most fatal single blow which had been struck at slavery in his day. He was a son of Vermont.

He knew that back of that protest stood, in solid phalanx, the Christian mind of these Eastern States. He knew, too, that that was a power which had never failed to make its words felt in deeds in crises of the nation's destiny. He heard in it the prophecy of doom. His own political aspirations, founded on the extension of slavery, were fated from that hour, even if a more grim and imperative fate had not been creeping upon him. Hence arose the uncontrollable ire with which he greeted the expostulation of the New-England pulpit.

If further proof were needed, it is forthcoming in the almost universal tone of the religious press. With the exception of one sect, small in numbers, whose temperament and traditions held it aloof from all reforms, our periodical press spoke almost as with the voice of one man. It varied as the people did in intensity of utterance, but in substantial meaning that utterance was one. The trumpet gave one prolonged blast of warning.

These tokens of the Christian sentiment of New England do not admit of question. They have gone into history. They are graven in the rock for ever. As Mr. Webster said to Gen. Hayne of the national fame of Massachusetts, so say we of all New England: "There is her history. The world knows it by heart." And we claim, that in the forefront of the warfare of antislavery opinion, which this group of States conducted, stood our churches and their ministry.

We claim for them more than this. We claim, that, if they had been let alone, they would have been successful. Turn back a hundred years. Look at the public sentiment of Virginia at that time. Read the deliverances of Jefferson, of Patrick Henry, of James Madison, of George Wyeth, — indeed, of all the public men of the Old Dominion. Mark their abhorrence of the policy which threatened to make Virginia a slave-breeding State. Note the social degradation of the men who conducted the domestic slave-trade. Observe the unanimous voice of the pulpit against the breaking-up of negro families by sale. One can not recall these signs of the drift of public opinion, without discerning that Virginia was on the verge of peaceful emancipation. Every thing leaned that way. And, as the social forces of the Republic were then poised, as went Virginia, so went all the rest of the slave States. That was fore-ordained.

Now, we claim, that starting with that drift of public sentiment in the Old Dominion, and with the prestige which that State had in the politics of the country, if the great alliances of Christian faith had been left to work in their normal way, unhampered by the inflammatory policies of the extremists on either side, and specially by those which at the North soon succeeded in identifying antislavery with infidelity, slavery would have succumbed to moral power. To doubt it, is to doubt all Christian history. The negro would have come up to the rights of liberty, as he *grew*

up to the duties of liberty. He would not have been *exploded* from the cannon's mouth into the miserable fiction of it which he has to-day, in which he has neither the intelligence to prize, nor the power to use, a freeman's ballot. Every decade adds to the proof, that our ministry, and those who thought with them, were right in their faith that liberty *grows*: it never sails into the sulphurous air on the wings of dynamite.

This nation, in the first century of its existence, had the grandest opportunity that nation ever had, of putting to the proof the power of Christianity to extirpate a great national wrong, without stroke of sword, or beat of drum—and we flung it to the winds! In the forefront of the hosts who committed the awful sacrilege, we charge that there stood the “fire-eaters” of the South and the abolitionists of New England. On their heads rests the responsibility for the civil war, and the outpouring of the life-blood of five hundred thousand men! Such is the verdict which history will render in the coming ages, when the world has become *used* to the righting of organic wrongs by bloodless revolutions.

## XVI.

### THE NEW-ENGLAND CLERGY AND THE ANTI-SLAVERY REFORM.

#### PART II.

WHAT were the causes which created mutual repulsion between those who, in a former article, have been termed the reformers and the destructives in the antislavery controversy? The story is soon told.

1. The reformers believed, as the destructives did not, in the rectitude of tolerating organic evils till a Christian civilization had an opportunity to undermine them. They had great faith in the reformatory force of truth, working slowly and underground. They accepted, with amendments, the Mosaic economy in dealing with human servitude. They did not believe that the world had outgrown it. Their religion had, in other ages and countries, uprooted barbarisms more inveterate than that of American slavery. It had done this, not by tempestuous and bloody assault, but on the Mosaic principle, by silent and gradual undermining. They believed that it could do the same again. It might act with labyrinthal intri-

cacy of movement, but with exactest clockwork, which would never go back on its own advances.

They accepted it, therefore, as one of the political principles, wrapped up in the very life of Christianity, that sanguinary revolutions and "reigns of terror" are *not* the normal method of organic changes in social order. On this principle they acted. They conceived that they had no right to effect the destruction of the wrong which threatened the nation's life by the convulsions of civil war. They had no right to prevent death in one way by inflicting death in another. What for, they asked in homespun Saxon, should they do that thing? If, in the purposes of God, such was to be the permitted manner of the end, the bolt must be forged and hurled by other hands than theirs. They would meet their solemn duty in the tragedy if it came, when it came; but it was not theirs to create the duty, nor to inflict the tragedy. Theirs was a mission of peace.

We confidently ask what other position could they hold, as preachers of Christianity? Our religion, from the beginning, in its relation to political reforms, has been a power of peaceful revolution. As related to African servitude, it was that or nothing. Its ordained ministers could do no otherwise than to choose a policy which would not set rivers of blood to flowing. Were they sinners above all other men for this? Had this been the only cause of repulsion between the two wings of reform, it would have been imperative.

2. But it was *not* the only cause. The reformers believed, as the destructives did not, that slavery could be abolished without sundering the union of the States. The dissolution of the union was the avowed object of agitation by the destructives. This was their supreme aim. Till it was achieved, nothing was achieved. The Union, like the Church, was a “fraternity of man-stealers” and a “band of thugs.” No honest man could participate in it for an hour. Wendell Phillips could not vote for a deputy sheriff in Boston, so long as a bedridden slave was fed by his owner in Texas. For forty years he and his colleagues lived for the disruption of the republic.

The reformers denied both the premise and the conclusion. To the clergy of New England, especially, this republic was a sacred thing. They saw in it, not the work of man. The hand of God was in it from the beginning. Their godly ancestry had founded it in prayer. They had a religious faith about it which took in the destinies of the world within its range. The liberty and redemption of all mankind were suspended upon its perpetuity.

This conception of the mission of these States they had inherited from the colonial and revolutionary times. Says John Adams, “I always consider the settlement of America with reverence and wonder as the opening of a grand scene and design of Providence for the illumination of the ignorant and the emancipation of mankind all

over the earth." John Adams obtained that idea from the clergy of his time. The pulpit then was full of it. From thence it came down to the pulpit of the period we are reviewing. To the ministry of that period, it was a relic of a more than heroic age. It was never forgotten at their Thanksgiving festivals; they were wont to pray for the Union and the bondman in the same breath. Such was their politico-religious creed. They believed it with heart and soul. What for, they asked, after these years of fidelity to it as a sacred trust, should they be faithless to the republic now? Had there been no other reason for the antagonism of the two antislavery forces, this alone would have driven them apart.

3. But there *was* another reason. The reformers believed, as the destructives did not, in the efficacy of the suasive as opposed to the abusive policy in debate. The ascendancy, almost the monopoly, given by the destructives to invective in the controversy, was offensive to the good taste, and revolting to the good sense, of the reformers.

The great bulk of any large, and specially an educated, body of public men is made up of men of robust sense. The ministry of New England were men of that stamp. They were not imbeciles, and they were not savages in controversy. They could see no reason for exempting slavery from the laws of courteous and honorable discussion. To make the exemption was a confession. It confessed that their cause could not stand the

test of the manly modes in which thinking men were accustomed to deal with thinking men. Frantic vituperation in a great national debate is a sign of conscious weakness or of conscious wrong.

The principle of the destructives in this thing was criminal; if not criminal, it was ungentlemanly; if not ungentlemanly, it was silly; if not silly, it was insane. The policy of agitation founded on it was not worthy of bearded men. It was the eccentricity of a common scold. Statesmen at the head of sovereign republics, and hard-knuckled men at the polls, could not be expected to yield their convictions, and change their votes, for a deluge of clapperclaw. It was but a truism of common sense, that self-respecting men anywhere would not tolerate such methods of approach. The abolitionists themselves never would have done it. The reformers would not do it. Nobody would do it. Nothing but fanatical passion could make such an exorbitant demand on human nature. In asserting that demand, fanatical passion was puerile.

As practical men, therefore, the reformers denounced the policy of invective as one which, seconded by that of the resists at the opposite extreme, blocked up every avenue to emancipation except the *via mala* of civil war. Thus they looked at it as a question of policy. Looking at it as a question of principle, they could not help seeing, that to suspend on such a policy the success of a

great humanitarian revolution, and the peace of a great nation, and the liberty of a great race, was a crime against the civilization of the world. Looking *now* at the grim history of the end, who was right?

In any aspect of the case, the vituperative ferocity of the destructives could not fail to repel from them the tastes and the convictions and the good sense of an educated and dispassionate clergy. As gentlemen, as wise men, as patriotic men, as Christian men, they could not seek such an alliance. What for, they asked again, shall we do this great folly? The two wings of antislavery sentiment must have parted asunder for this cause alone, even if there were none more sacred.

4. But there *was* a cause more sacred. The reformers believed, as many of the destructives did not, in the inspiration of the Old Testament and the divine origin of the Christian Church. It has been the misfortune of the cause of liberty, the world over, to attract to its support men who have been more hostile to Christianity than to tyranny. Such was the fate of American antislavery as represented by the abolitionist wing in the controversy.

The abolitionists welcomed to their fellowship, and in part to their leadership, men and women whose chief resources in debate were denunciations of the Mosaic institutions and the teachings of St. Paul. Some of them were expert in their flings at Him whose name is above every name.

They shocked our most sacred sensibilities. They travestied our supreme hopes for ourselves and for the world.

Not all of the abolitionists were of this character. William Jay was not: Arthur and Lewis Tappan were not. Indeed, a marked distinction grew up between the abolitionist platform of Boston and that of New York — the latter being much less given to outrage of Christian convictions. Long before the war, the distinction grew to alienation. The Tappans, William G. Burney, the "Free-soil" candidate for the Presidency of the United States, and others of that ilk, could not work with the leaders of the Boston platform any more genially than the New-England clergy could. Each wing had its separate organ. "The Emancipator" and "The Liberator" represented policies as wide apart almost as the poles.

But geographical locality compelled the New-England clergy to deal chiefly with the abolitionists of Boston, not with those of New York. In Massachusetts they encountered the anti-Christian type of abolitionism, in its most virulent form. It infected weak ones in our churches. Under the advice of its apostles, they were enticed into faithlessness to their Christian vows. We were compelled to perform a duty which is the most painful one devolving on a Christian pastor, — to subject to discipline men of whose conscientiousness we had no more doubt than of our own. We must do it, or officially connive at treachery to our sacred Scriptures and the ordinances of Christ.

The collision concerned no question of abstract dogma. If it had, our duty *might* have been the same. But it did not. It came home to us in the most hallowed duties of Christian fellowship. We felt the shock of it in our assemblies for social prayer and at the Lord's Supper. We were intruded upon by some of the leaders of the reform, who came into our meetings to tempt away from us beloved members of our churches. Tracts calumniating the Bible and the Church were put into the hands of our children, and circulated in our Sunday schools. What could we do? Should we have sat idle? Should we have taken the intruders by the hand, and bade them God-speed? We did not so read our commission from our Lord.

Yet it is due to honest history to say that Wendell Phillips was not understood to approve the antislavery assaults upon the Scriptures. The clergy had no more bitter foe than he; but of the Word of God, he was said to be a reverent believer. Doubtless there were many others less eminent among the abolitionists of New England who agreed with him in that respect.

But we were not tempted to trust him as a Christian leader of a great reform, nor was our respect for him as a Christian man increased by such occurrences as the following. On a memorable occasion, he was indulging in his usual tirade against men and institutions and States in general. Massachusetts came in for her full share of his abuse. He took up the formula which the mem-

ory of the fathers ought to have made sacred on his lips, “*God save the Commonwealth of Massachusetts!*” By interpolating the most vulgar of the profane words which one hears in the slums of Boston, he transmuted it into an execration of his native State. We did not follow him as a model, either in religion or good taste. Ought we to have done so? Should the reverend clergy of Boston have imitated him in their next reading of the governor’s proclamation of a day of thanksgiving? We did not so interpret our ordination vows.

Men whose tastes craved such things, and whose religion approved them, were numerous enough on the platform of abolition in New England, to give coloring to the policy represented there. To this day, all over the South, the name of “abolitionist” is the synonym of every most virulent type of infidel and scoffer. A reform, like a man, is known by the company it keeps.

The clergy could not join hands with such men without treachery to Christ. They could not form alliance with even the nobler class of the destructives without lending the sanctity of their profession to the moral support of *other* men, whom they believed to be enemies of their Lord. They were but human if they felt on personal grounds, also, that it was an insult to ask it of them. Whatever other men might think of them, they respected themselves. They revered their calling. When men came to them, seeking their fellowship, and,

at the same time, branding the Church of Christ as the “brotherhood of thieves,” and the “spawn of hell,” humility was not just then the chief of their graces. It would have been a dishonor to them if it had been. There is a great deal of human nature in Christian ministers, and well is it for them and for truth that it is so.

But, in the historical juncture now under review, necessity laid an embargo on their fellowship with the destructives. There was no common ground on which men who believed *first* in Christianity, and *then* in civil liberty, could even carry on discussion very freely with men who believed first in civil liberty, and in Christianity not at all, and whose destructive appetite was so voracious for sacred things. Two or three fragments of history will give a picture of the times. After the lapse of thirty years, I claim for them, not a literal, but a substantial, accuracy. If they err, it is rather within than beyond the truth.

Once upon a time we made respectful mention of Moses, as authority for the toleration of organic wrongs. The only reply we got was, “So much the worse for Moses, then.” Again, we reverently quoted St. Paul, in proof of exceptional cases in which the legal ownership of a slave might *not* be the “sum of all villanies.” The rejoinder was flung contemptuously in our faces, “Who, pray, is St. Paul?” We were innocent enough to recall with reverence the words of our Lord, “I have many things to say unto you, but ye can not bear

them now ; ” and we were about to ask whether the principle of reserve of truth, in consideration of the infirmities of men, might not possibly admit of a broader application. But the autocrat of the platform thundered in reply, “ Reserve of truth about slavery, by God or man, is the policy of hell.” Once more we ventured to cite the silence of the Master upon Roman slavery, as possibly instructive to later times. But, before we had finished our story, the war-whoop came back, “ If Jesus Christ was tolerant of slavery, then down with Jesus Christ ! ” And — could it be that we heard aright ? — the voice was the voice of a woman !

What could we do ? The hypothetical gauze of such flings at the person and teachings of our Lord could not conceal their venom. They were blasphemy to our ears. They made the whole atmosphere sulphurous. Reverent believers in the Scriptures would have been recreant to their faith if they had entered into alliance with men who so maligned the name of Jesus. We could not lift them to our level of thinking ; and we would not, if we could, descend to theirs. What for, we asked again, should we commit such sacrilege ?

5. Added to these causes of alienation between the abolitionists and the clergy was another. It was not good *policy* for the religious men of New England to act in alliance with the extremists, even if on other grounds it had been possible. Bear with the word “ *policy* ” a moment. Prac-

tical men in a great reform aim at practical results. They are not content with blurting out their say. They aim so to put things with such alliances of auxiliary opinion as to gain their object. They seek to allay prejudices, to convince opponents, to win over dissenters, to convert wrong-doers. It is one thing to do this: it is a very different thing to explode opinions from the platform in sound and fury. The luxury of doing good is in the one, the luxury of oppugnation in the other.

The New-England churches were made up of practical men. Their clergy contained few men to whom the luxury of oppugnation was a necessity. They had access to the Southern religious mind through community of religious faith. Several great Christian denominations bound the two sections of the country together. For once and a half the lifetime of a generation, good men at the South were open to conviction on the slavery question, if approached in a sensible way by good men at the North. The clergy of the North were not willing to sacrifice that hold upon the Southern conscience by affiliation with extremists. They ought not to have been so. It was good policy, in the sense of sound practical wisdom, to hold aloof from men of destructive aims and passions. An alliance with such men was too heavy a load to carry.

Many of our ministry did avail themselves of their religious hold upon the South as long as it was of any practical use. The ablest arguments

in defense of the antislavery cause were published by them. When the abolitionists were boiling over in the frenzy of the reform, the ministry, like soldiers in trenches, under fire of shot and shell from both sides, were calmly laying down its principles, and building up its proofs. When the one class were denouncing the Bible for its complicity with slavery, the other were using it as the great bulwark of freedom. The most effective arguments in antislavery literature are the biblical arguments, and the most masterly summary of them in the language is the work of a Northern clergyman.<sup>1</sup> It was published chiefly in the hope of reaching the conscience and reason of the Southern churches. It probably had ten readers at the South where "The Liberator" had one.

As a matter of practical wisdom, it would have been insane for such men as the author of that book to join hands with abolitionists of the school of Wendell Phillips and Mr. Garrison. The Rev. Albert Barnes spoke the conviction which the policy of that school had forced upon the thoughtful Christian men of the time, when he said, "If a just cause could be killed by the folly of its friends, the cause of African liberty would have been so by the spirit and methods of the abolitionists."

A single reminiscence of the civil war will illustrate this fact of the impolicy of alliance with the abolitionists on the part of the clergy. A

<sup>1</sup> See "Barnes on Slavery."

Massachusetts chaplain in the war-time was under the command of Gen. Butler at Yorktown. He was ordered to take possession of a Presbyterian pulpit. He was obliged to spend a half-day, more or less, in defending himself from the charge of infidelity. "Where are you from?"—"From Massachusetts."—"Doesn't Garrison live in Massachusetts? Theodore Parker—isn't he in Massachusetts? Are they not Congregationalists, as you are? Do you come here from red-handed fellowship with the men who have brought all this trouble upon us, to preach *to us* the gospel of Jesus Christ?" Such was the *animus* of the colloquy. It illustrates how ponderous was the load of obloquy which a clergyman had to carry, if he was tainted with suspicion of fellowship with the abolitionists of Boston. To the Southern religious mind, they represented the extreme type, not only nor chiefly of hostility to slavery, but of more venomous hostility to Christianity itself.

On all the grounds here considered, the two classes of antislavery men now under review parted by an intense and unconquerable repulsion. They could not do otherwise. There were no moral affinities which could outweigh these antipathies. The poles of an electric battery are not more repellent and mutually destructive. Which was right, ultimate history must determine. But right or wrong on either side, the two could not amalgamate. Nor was there any *vinculum* strong enough in fiber to hold them together, even as dis-

tant allies. They sprang asunder with irresistible rebound. The lines of their divergence were like those of an hyperbola, diverging now, and diverging for ever.

So far as the attitude of the clergy had the look to a superficial observer of complicity with slavery, or indifference to the outrage it inflicted on the rights of man, it was only in the seeming. It was a repetition of the social phenomenon which has so often overclouded the history of liberty,—that thoughtful reformers are outrun and overborne by passionate reformers. Men of passion in such a conjunction of elements have the advantage over men of reason. Reason argues: passion storms. Reason persuades: passion denounces. Reason wins: passion drives. Reason builds: passion burns. If, then, religion happens to be brought into the conflict, it is very apt to be driven to the wall. Liberty and Christianity are forced into an unnatural antagonism. The best that good men can do is to make a choice of evils. In their resistance to infidelity, they must seem to be enemies to freedom. Their fidelity to God takes on the look of treachery to men.

Many times over has this monstrous alliance of right with wrong taken place in the history of civilization. The phenomenon is visible to-day in almost every country in Europe. Religion and despotism seem to be allies. The Church supports the re-actionary State. Hengstenberg in the pulpit joins hands with Trendlenburg at the bar, and

both bow to Bismarck at the palace ; and all conspire against nihilistic reform.

When, anywhere, the critical juncture comes in which reform under infidel leadership demands the sacrifice of religion to liberty, there can be no question where the Christian ministry ought to stand. If they are men, they will be true first to their Christian vows. To denounce them as traitors to the rights of man because they will not be traitors to the ordinances of God, is not only a calumny. It is proof either of woful prejudice or of densest ignorance. A very moderate knowledge of history ought to suffice to save any fair-minded man from such a blunder in public affairs, and such cynicism in judgment of men.

Such was at times the enforced attitude of the New-England clergy towards the infidel wing of antislavery reformers. Looking back now to those days of suspended destiny, we claim for the churches and clergy of these States, that, as a body, they did what men on whom rested the responsibility of Christian vows ought to have done. That they did no more, was due to the unfortunate complications of the reform with infidelity. But we claim, that, in what they did do, they represented the vital and regenerative forces which finally won the victory. To them, and to men in sympathy with them, belonged the moral weight and momentum which carried the nation through those perilous years, and through the catastrophe of the civil war. They, and that

portion of the national mind which thought with them, were the power whose decree put an end to slavery. It is the unthinking mood of the present to laud the abolitionists as the pioneers and the autocrats of the antislavery reform. Not so will history finally write that page in our annals.

It is never the destructives who carry to its triumph a salutary revolution. It is never they who in perilous crises save the State. They and the resistsants create such crises. The State lives through their disastrous agitations in spite of both. Its true conservators are the great intermediate class between the two extremes. These are led by men of collected and balanced minds, men of "large discourse," men of long head and not head-long in opinions and in policy. The real pioneers of the antislavery reform came over in the "Mayflower." The germs of its triumph circulated in the blood of the Puritan stock. And of this no other single representative has been so potent all along the line of history as the collective mind of the New-England churches and their clergy.

The abolitionists of half a century ago were the pioneers of the antislavery conflict, only as the Jacobins of Paris were pioneers of the French Republic of to-day; only as the Carbonari of Italy were the pioneers of the Italian unity originated by Count Cavour; only as the nihilists of Russia are the pioneers of the Russian liberties that are to be. It was in perfect keeping with his natural affinities that Wendell Phillips left behind him, as

the last significant act of his career, a justification of the nihilist assassins of St. Petersburg. He had been a nihilist all his life. Never is a great nation indebted largely to such men for its liberty. It is a falsification of history to advance them to the front rank of a nation's reformers, and to revere them as the rebuilders of the national life.

The time for writing that antislavery chapter of our annals has not yet come. When it does come, the historian will ascribe the overthrow of slavery, not to the extremists who played their little part, and spoke their little pieces, on the stage, and passed away. He will trace it to the statesmen, the political economists, the journalists, the historians, the poets, the novelists, the educators, the scholars, and the preachers, who have been the normal leaders of the thought of the great middle class. They are the men who have held this reform in even balance with other interests of State and Church. They are the men of mental equipoise, of temperate opinions, of patient reason, of wise policies, of weighted speech, and of steady force. Such are always the men who carry in their persons the destiny of nations.

The clergy of New England, from John Mayhew down, have been profound believers. Theirs has been a great faith in great ideas. One of those ideas has been the identity of the cause of human liberty with the cause of Christ. They have been at the direct and extreme antipodes to one of the New-England abolitionists, who, in the frenzy of

reform, said, "We must get rid of Christ." Our ministry have never for an hour separated these two things,—Christianity and Freedom.

When Choiseul, prime minister of France in the time of our revolution, desired to know the temper of the American people respecting independence from Great Britain, he gave orders that extracts should be collected from the sermons of the New-England pulpit. He would know what teaching the people received from their religious leaders. Those papers are still to be found among the archives of the French Republic. It was on such testimony that he advised the alliance of France with America. He found our people instructed in the principles of free government, and devoted to the cause of liberty. They were the pupils, in this respect, not so much of their statesmen as of their educated and scholarly ministry. Indeed, it is interesting to see the evidences, in the State-papers and legislative discussions of those days, of the indebtedness of our statesmen to the instructions of the pulpit under which they had grown up. Choiseul trusted both the statesmen and the people for the sake of their religious teachers. "Like priest, like people," was the proverb of his nation.

The same trust has been deserved by the New-England clergy to this day. They have never been false to their inheritance. They have been reformers without being fanatics. They have been advanced thinkers without being destruc-

tives. They have been men who could build the new without ruin to the old. They have held their own valiantly among the elect spirits of all ages, on the side of right, of freedom, of progress, and of God.

## XVII.

### MASSACHUSETTS AND THE QUAKERS.

IT is an old story, but it needs revision. We are accustomed to excuse the action of Massachusetts in that business of the Quakers, on the ground that she was fully abreast with the age, and by some paces beyond it, in the humaneness of her legislation. But this is not all. A careful investigation of the case discloses other grounds, which would have made it seem an anomaly to the judgment of the age if Massachusetts had *not* hanged such Quakers as she had to deal with.

One ground of her defense is the unique tenure by which the Colony held their ownership of the territory. They held it, not by royal patent alone. That might have given to others the same right that they had to a local habitation and to civil rights here. They held it by individual and collective purchase. Their charter confirmed in unequivocal terms the right they had in common law to say who should, and who should not, set foot on the soil. It made that right the full equivalent of individual ownership, not merely the right of political sovereignty. Every rod of land covered by their charter, they held by the same tenure by which a man owned his door-yard.

Every man's house is his castle. He has the right to eject from the lands covered by his title-deeds any intruder thereon. If he says the word, the trespasser must go. If the unwelcome guest refuses to obey the order, the owner has the right to use so much of personal force as may be necessary to rid his property of the nuisance. Law is not nice, and was not then, in estimating the reasons for the ejection. With reason, or without reason, the owner might remove the intruder from the premises. That a man had red hair, or wore a beard, was reason enough if the owner thought so. Law is not squeamish, and was not then, in measuring the exact degree or kind of force used in the expulsion. While aiming at substantial justice, it left a large leeway to the discretion of the proprietor in this respect. It made large allowance for passion and mistake in the righting of a wrong. It did not hold the owner to the bond as severely as Portia held Shylock. It recognized a right in the matter, which must somehow be vindicated, and not sacrificed through fear of hurting somebody.

Such was law as applied to colonial ownership of the land. Our fathers held the streets and commons of Boston as their own estate as sacredly as Gov. Winthrop held the house he lived in. This ownership by the body politic was carried so far, that, when Judge Sewall wanted to build an ell seven feet square to his house on the present site of the building of the Massachusetts Histori-

cal Society, he was obliged to ask leave of the General Court. It was this precise and sacred right of domain that the Quakers outraged. They did it in ways the most offensive that could be devised to the stern proprieties and the sterner morals of the Pilgrims.

Who, and what, were the colonial Quakers of those days? We must not imagine to ourselves meek and saintly men and women in modest drab apparel hanging on four gibbets on Boston Common. They were not such men as William Penn, and such women as Lucretia Mott. The sect was in its infancy: hardly that—it was in embryo. Every new sect is at first composed, in part, of men whose minds move in tangents. Eccentric men, crotchety men, men to whose vision nothing has two sides, are apt to get astride of a new thing in religion or in politics, as of a hobby-horse, and to ride off with it from the solid globe peopled by sensible men into the boundless spaces. Such men, too, are always attracted to a new country. Under the influences of such minds, the Quaker fraternity in Massachusetts passed its embryonic stage. It was not nearly so maturely developed as in the old country. Fanaticism overweighted piety. Eccentricity took precedence of good sense. The sect had not reached the age of respectability. It had not acquired that position in the world which wealth and numbers give, and which in every religious organization bring in worldly considerations to balance the tendency to fanaticism. The four

men and women — or woman rather, for there was but one — of whom the Colony rid itself so tragically, were people who, in the name of conscience and the “divine light,” outraged the laws of decency and morality. They need the mantle of charity more than Massachusetts does, and they deserve it less.

It goes against the grain of something in our better nature, to admit the plea of conscience in their behalf. A good conscience is good sense. When it is the voice of God, it speaks with dignity and self-possession. It is perilous to train the public conscience or one’s own to shield a thing which the common sense of mankind can not respect. The world is very keen in knowing when to spell the word with a large “W.” Men venerable for conscience’ sake do not tramp naked through the streets at mid-day. Saintly women do not march unclothed, yet unblushing, up and down the broad aisles of churches at the hour of public worship. Even the dying words of “martyrs” ought not to pass for much when they suffer for shameless deportment. Mary Dyer on the scaffold is a sad spectacle, but not a respectable one. We can not weep a great while at her saintly words.

Yet this was the style of Quaker which the magistrates of Massachusetts had to deal with. A very different sort of being evidently from Benjamin Franklin and George Fox. To hang him was not well; but, under the circumstances, his resolve to be hanged was worse.

Another fact which has seldom received the weight which it deserves, is that, as it respects the plea of conscience, the magistrates stood on ground at least as lofty as that of the Quakers. The scruples of the one were as worthy of respect as those of the other. Both lived in an age of twilight. Each party regarded the other as advocates of pestilent beliefs and damnable practices. The conscience of each denounced the other in the name of God. The Quaker obeyed his "inner light:" the magistrate obeyed his oath. Looking at the conflict at its worst for the case of the government, it was an action of "*Conscience versus Conscience*." If the recusants committed a venial offence in their resistance to the State under stress of conscience, an equal stress of conscience must relieve the State also with equal reason. In the court of conscience, we can discern only an immovable body in the pathway of an irresistible force. Who shall give a verdict? If the execution of the Quakers was murder, their resolve to be executed was suicide. What is the moral distinction between the two?

But the contestants for conscience' sake were *not* equal. They did not stand on common ground in asking for the verdict of mankind. The State represented the moral convictions of the age. She was supported by the common conscience of the world. Numbers do not make a right, but they do palliate a wrong. The State had the moral authority of numbers at her back. She was ex-

ecuting the ancient laws of England. Those laws she had not originated, but inherited. She continued a policy which the ablest statesmen and the wisest jurists of the past had created for the safety of public order. Till then, nobody had ventured to question its rectitude or its necessity. The recusants represented a novelty in government, and a frenzy in religion. They defied the laws of morality as enacted in all civilized lands and times. They claimed the right to do it in defiance of law of ancient usage, and of the moral sense of nations.

Under these conditions, we claim, that, in the court of conscience, the two contestants were not equals. The State was morally the superior. She anticipated in her final action the jurisprudence of enlightened nations down to our own time. She was in the same dilemma, in kind, in which the United-States Government now is in the solution of the Mormon problem. She defended that which the common sense of the world now defends as essential to the well-being of society, the qualms of fanatical consciences to the contrary notwithstanding. With these accompaniments as a framework, the "murder" of the Quakers is a less repulsive picture than their "suicide."

Another fact pertinent to the matter is, that, when the law of banishment was enacted, the Commonwealth did not mean to execute it. It was the explosion of a blank cartridge. Until the time of that tilt with the offending Quakers, the *threat* of legal penalty had been sufficient to rid

the colony of such nuisances. English precedents had placed many penal statutes on record, which were meant as threats only. Nearly two hundred and fifty crimes were then by English law punishable with death, not half of which probably ever resulted in the execution of the penalty. True, it is not good government to enact laws to be a dead letter; but such was the usage of the age. In Massachusetts it had not worked badly. Other men had been exiled; and, when the State told them to go, they went. Other impracticable consciences had been banished for the peace of the infant nation; and, when told that they were not wanted here, they went where they were wanted. Roger Williams, under sentence of exile, migrated over the State-line into Rhode Island; and he stayed there. All the experience which up to that time our fathers had had, with delinquents of tangential minds and crotchety conscience, had been with men and women who had not thought it worth while to defy the whole artillery of the State for the hum of the “bee in their bonnets.”

Other such laws remained a score of years on the statute-books without a solitary execution. A law was passed, that, for certain offenses, the culprit should have his tongue bored through with a hot iron. The fathers had a great many irons in the fire, but that iron was never once withdrawn. The threat sufficed. So they expected the law against Quakers to work, and with good reason. Neither government nor people desired to hang

a Quaker. They were not affectionately fond of Quakers, but neither were they ferociously fond of hanging Quakers. They did not take kindly to the Quaker sect, nor to its notions of social decency; but as little did they take thirstily to the business of the scaffold in social discipline.

In picturing the scene, therefore, of the four gibbets on Boston Common, we must not fancy that we see a crowd of sanctimonious Puritans exulting with nasal psalmody in the sufferings of meek and godly offenders. There was no such thing. Our fathers were there in no bloodthirsty spirit. They did not visit upon helpless victims a malign authority. They did not even go out of their way to seek occasion for the execution of the law. On the contrary, they did every thing in their power to avoid it as a misfortune. They reasoned, they pleaded, they coaxed, they preached, they exhorted, they threatened, they expostulated, they prayed, they tried silence, they tried time, they appointed a fast-day, they consulted the clergy, they took counsel of the judges, they sought wisdom from the wisest men in England, they summoned the General Court, before they would give to the refractory and defiant Quakers the doom they sought. When at last the tragic end came, both Government and people were heartily tired of the whole business. If they could have begun it with the experience with which they ended, the deed never would have been done. "We desire their life absent, rather than their

death present," said the magistrates; and the people responded, "So say we all." On this point, there were not two opinions in the whole colony.

But the Quaker of colonial Massachusetts was an anomalous being. Only in the nickname, and a few other trifles, did he resemble the clear-headed and sound-hearted "Friend" of our times. He was a monomaniac. He was open neither to reason nor to suasion. He yielded to neither threat nor promise. He lived in a delirious antagonism to other men. In Shakspeare's "Julius Cæsar," Brutus says of Cicero,—

"He will never follow any thing  
That other men begin."

Such was the colonial Quaker. His theory of the "inner light" made every man his own God. He had visions and dreams which lifted him above all law. He heard voices in the air, and saw things uncanny in the night-time. What other men "began," he could not "follow." What other men would not begin, he was very apt to have a revelation from heaven that he must begin. A blissful mania for minorities possessed him. That other men took off their hats in courtesy to a stranger, was reason enough to him for keeping his hat on. That other men said "You," was equivalent to a divine command to him to say "Thou." That men generally wore rolling collars to their coats, was enough to make it a sin to him to wear any collar at all.

The world is large enough for only one such man. Two of them, with the whole planet to themselves, would fight, and the weaker would get the worst of it. Such men are fanatics, not of the colossal type, like Ignatius Loyola, not even of the terrible and malign type, like Torquemada, but of the puny sort, like our wretched Freeman of Pocasset, who butchered his sleeping child in emulation of Abraham, and whom we have shut up in a madhouse for no very satisfactory reason, except that we do not know what else to do with him. Our fathers of the olden time would have hanged him. Is it certain that they would not have been wiser than we? The plea of insanity for every abnormal horror which human nature perpetrates in its freaks of vanity, is quite too slippery for sensible government. The halter is less so, and less liable to abuse.

Such was the unreasoning, somnambulistic Quaker of Massachusetts in the colonial age. He came to Massachusetts, not because he had any business here, but because he was told to stay away. One of them could invent no excuse for coming till he saw the gibbet awaiting him if he did come. His soul hankered after the service of God in an exalted station. He longed to make a grand spectacle of his mission, even though it should be given him at the rope's end. Had he been a Frenchman, he would have committed suicide by a leap from the summit of the Tower Vendôme. The world has always been at its wits' end to know what to

do with such men. They are not downright maniacs, they are not imbeciles; they are too old for asylums for feeble-minded children; yet they are not men of sense. Unfortunately, we have no half-way refuge between the asylum and the scaffold.

There is a border-land between insanity and crime which neither our medical science nor our jurisprudence has yet thoroughly explored. Clouds and darkness envelop it. The most accomplished experts of the age were divided in opinion as to the execution of Guiteau. In that cloudland the colonial Quaker roamed and dreamed. The authorities of the Commonwealth had too many other things to do to allow them to solve the obscure politico-moral problems upon which the culture of our own age is yet so reticent.

Martyrdom unsought and for a great principle, is a sublime and holy thing. It deserves monuments in the highways, and shrines on the hills, to which pilgrims shall go for inspiration and prayer. But martyrdom invited is of quite another sort. There have been times when martyrdom was a fashion. Men and women fell into a frenzy about it, and sought it as horses are said to rush into a burning stable. Some minds are born with that kind of idiosyncrasy. "There are ever appearing in the world, men who, almost as soon as they are born, take a bee-line for the rack of the inquisitor or the ax of the tyrant." Many years ago, in the old days of slavery, a slave-insurrection broke out

in South Carolina. The leaders were arrested and hanged by the dozen. At last a passion for the scaffold grew up among the negroes. They informed falsely against themselves. They confessed in the face of a proved *alibi*. Life was a feather in the scale against the drama of the scaffold. The masters were compelled to stay the slaughter of their human chattels.

Martyrdom thus sought and prayed for, and when the thing in dispute is the pitiful right to outrage the common decencies of life, is no longer the sacred thing which history calls by the name. It is not even respectable — no more so than any other kind of insane delusion : it is only pitiable. If it is not insanity, it is not even misfortune : it is a crime. The judgment of the world ranks it with suicide. Its victims by ancient law were buried at cross-roads. Such was the "martyrdom" of the Massachusetts Quakers. The chief fault of the colonial government was not, that it executed the laws of the land against them, but that it was not wise enough to let them alone, except to clothe the naked, and send them to the lockup. If "Punch" had existed then, they might have been safely left to the pillory of its ridicule. It is an error to dignify such indecencies, when committed in the name of conscience, by the infliction of solemn penalties. The only penalty they need is the broad laugh of common sense.

Under all the provocations which the colonists suffered, the public opinion through the whole

transaction was averse to the extreme penalty of the law. The humane sentiment which soon after reformed the sanguinary laws of England in the colony, was then struggling to the birth; and in the House of Deputies the Act against the Quakers was carried by a majority of one only. The temper of the people was humane. At a time when the penal code of England recognized nearly two hundred and fifty capital crimes, that of Massachusetts counted less than ten. A century and a half later Sir Samuel Romilly said of the code of the mother country, "I have examined the codes of all nations, and ours is the worst. It is worthy of the Anthropophagi."

Such was the school of jurisprudence in which our fathers had been trained. They were not in spirit a persecuting race of men. Their severity was a short-lived experiment, almost the last wave of intolerance from the shores of England, which expended itself in Boston in but four cases of execution. The law which made Quakerism a felony remained on the statute-books of England many years after it was repealed in Massachusetts. New England has often been contrasted to her disadvantage in this respect with the Old Dominion, as if all the intolerance of the country was concentrated in the four Eastern colonies. But the Puritans of Massachusetts had repealed the laws against the free exercise of religion by the Quakers a long while before the Cavaliers of Virginia did it.

Why, then, did Massachusetts execute the an-

cient law at all? A fair question, and quickly answered. She was weak, and in peril. This is the explanation, and the whole of it. Like other weak powers in danger, she vaulted into the extreme of self-defense. The whole business was the work of conscious feebleness in an emergency. It was not yet proved that the Colony could live. The age was one of eccentric beliefs and abnormal practices. All the religious and political cranks in the kingdom, as is usual with new countries, seemed to gravitate towards New England. In all the colonies, there was an abnormal proportion of disorderly elements. Men of broken fortunes, fugitives from creditors and from justice, abounded. When to these were added emigrants who came with fanatical religious ideas, it is not surprising, that, to thoughtful minds, the danger sometimes appeared imminent that the Colony would be overwhelmed by elements not in sympathy with the objects of its foundation. In dread of that catastrophe, some had already begun to think of a new migration, they knew not whither.

Danger from the savages also was by no means obsolete. King Philip's war was yet to come. The firelocks on the kitchen-walls of the settlers had had no time to become rusty. There were outlying settlements remaining, in which men worshiped in the churches on the Lord's Day, leaning on their muskets; and hoed their corn in the spring, and gathered in their crops in the summer, with muskets loaded and primed on the stumps

not yet cleared from the forest-soil. Besides, the old generation of pioneers were gone. Heroic men and more heroic women had passed away. New-comers felt weakened by the loss. Gov. Winthrop lay in what is now King's-chapel graveyard. He had been a host in himself. He was a foreseeing man, who discerned new truths in their dawning, and whose mind was inventive of expedients. Had he been living, the Quaker tragedy might not have happened. His wise and balanced judgment would have discovered some other way of extricating the State from its dilemma.

All these things combined to deepen the sense of insecurity in the popular mind, and specially in the minds of the magistrates on whom the responsibility for the public safety rested. To them it seemed of prime importance, that the prestige of law should be kept inviolate. In troublous times, it would not do to show the white feather. It was not safe to let the savages of one continent, and the bedlamites of the other, know, that, when Massachusetts made up her mind, she did not know it. The suspicion must not be bruited, that, when she expressed her mind in statute, she did not mean it, or dared not execute it. No: this would never do.

Gov. Bradford of Plymouth, in the infancy of that colony, when his whole force of fighting-men was reduced to fifty against the five thousand whom the Narragansetts threatened to bring against him, sent back to them his belt filled with

powder and shot in response to their challenge with a rattlesnake-skin. The same policy of bravado may well have prompted the magistrates of Massachusetts, a generation later, to put on stern faces, and stand by their law against disturbers of the peace. They had said it, and the world must not think them too weak or too timid to do it. Weakness in an emergency struggling, not for life, but for things dearer than that, was at the bottom of the whole sad business.

This, at least, was the meaning of it, as it seemed to the vigilant judgment of those who must bear the responsibility of it before God and man. Taking all things into account, it was a less unworthy thing to do, and is more deserving of the respect and sympathy of mankind, than the conduct of the Quakers in braving the law and the public sentiment of the age. It is time that history should reverse the *proportions* of her verdict. She should transfer to the suffering offenders a large part of the censure which thus far Massachusetts has borne almost alone. Mr. Bancroft is quite too abject in his apologies for the colonial government. So, it is respectfully suggested, was the tone of the "confession" volunteered, some time ago, to a Friends' Meeting by some of our good brethren in Maine. That confession might better have read in this wise: "We humbly confess, that, in the ancient tilt between Puritanism and Quakerism, there was fault on both sides; and, as it was a great while ago, we are glad to believe that they have made it up before this time."

It has been too long the fashion, with a class of thoughtless critics, to fling at the Pilgrims for this Quaker business and the more dismal affair at Salem. That their fame has been able to bear so much of that kind of criticism, is proof that material for fair censure must be very scant in their history. The fame of Greek philosophers and Roman poets and English statesmen and French scientists could not have borne the half of it. These men the world has set in the frame of the ages in which they lived, and judged them by the temper of those ages. But the Pilgrims have been isolated from the world they knew and judged by the illumination of times, of which, with all their foresight, they never dreamed. It is time to have done with this. Let the Pilgrims have fair play. Set them in the place where their destiny put them, and judge them by its opportunities and possibilities. Their descendants have no fear of the result. They need no laudation of ours.

As soon as the condition of the colony improved, and the public safety seemed to be assured, the laws against Quaker immigration became a dead letter. They died out, as such laws have commonly done, because nobody cared enough about them to execute them. Persecuting powers commonly become more cruel as they grow stronger. Not so Massachusetts. When time and numbers consolidated her resources, and gave her the conservative consciousness of strength, she grew more humane. The cultured instincts of her religion came to

the surface, and diffused a Christian civilization through her institutions and social customs. She became, without exception, the most enlightened and liberal government in the world. The Quakers came and went at their pleasure, with none to molest them or make them afraid. And such is human nature in Quaker garb, as in that of Cavalier or Roundhead, that, when the State no longer gave them the dignity of the scaffold, they did not care to come in large numbers; and the sect has always been small on our soil. Cotton Mather quaintly told the *dénouément* of the story. "Since our Jerusalem was come to such consistence, that the going up of every fox would not break down our stone walls, who has ever meddled with 'em?"

## XVIII.

### DOES THE WORLD MOVE?

A STORY is told of a thrifty old lady in New York, who once listened to a colloquial discussion of the merits of modern progress. At the close, she summed up her own wisdom on the subject by observing, "For my part, the best signs I see of progress are two,—omnibuses and lucifer matches." Had she put it thus, Facility of travel and the preservation of fire, she would have been a home-made philosopher of the materialistic school. These are great facts in modern life. Civilization owes much to them.

If the question were circulated for a vote in an assembly of intelligent men, Is the human race on an advance rather than a retreat? nine out of ten would vote in the affirmative, and would give in evidence things belonging to the same school with the omnibus and the lucifer match. Material progress is sure to make itself heard and seen. The rumbling of a railroad train burdens the very night air. The tramp of an army makes the earth tremble. An Armstrong gun, if not heard, is heard of, around the globe. Such things compel observation, and force their way into history.

They often crowd out of sight and hearing the silent revolutions.

Is the evidence as clear that there *are* silent revolutions in which the world is moving to the conquest of great intellectual and moral improvements? Is man on a line of march forward in the realm of Ideas?

I. It is very certain that the time *has* been when the world did advance in the growth of great ideas, which we of to-day inherit. Wordsworth said that in his day, “plain living and high thinking” were no more; but they had been in better times. History has stored them in imperishable records. The Greek idea of beauty, for example, has become the world’s treasure. It will never grow obsolete. The Greek idea of poetry has passed into all subsequent literatures, and will live there for ever. Plato and Aristotle to this day are the two foci of all the philosophy which the world has thought out. So much, at least, the past has conquered from barbarism, which the future will never let die.

Rome also had her mission to the generations of all subsequent time. It was a mission of ideas more than of material progress. The Roman idea of law lives in all the jurisprudence of the world, which has any chance of perpetuity. Its ramifications run through the institutions on which every great national life of to-day depends. An empire like that of England never could have lived, but for Rome’s tribute to its foundation in law and

obedience to law. The Middle Ages would have been a fatal and final relapse into Vandalism, but for the conservative ideas infused into them by Roman history.

The same creative idea of Law was the thing which made possible the birth of the American Republic. To Rome *as a republic*, herself realizing republican institutions, we owe very little in comparison with our debt to Rome the empire, which gave solidity to law as a power capable of ruling a world. American eloquence from the Revolution down has been adorned with a great deal of flourish over the Roman and Greek democracies, but it is surprising how little our fathers really appropriated from the ancient stock of ideas. It was almost nothing worth mentioning. The ancient democracy was *not* the modern republic. The real power from antiquity, which built the foundation of our free institutions, was the mailed hand of Roman law which pervaded all Roman history, from the Tarquins to the Cæsars, and which grew to its full, athletic muscle in the best days of the empire.

The critical question respecting modern progress is, Has it any thing equal to that of ancient times to show for itself in the world of *ideas*? Is it adding any thing to the world's stock of heroic and immortal thought? A railway map of a continent is a grand thing to look at. The tramp of a million armed men is an imposing thing to hear. An invisible spirit seems to live in a telescopic rifle

which kills at a distance of a mile. But these are things of course, in a world so full as this of material forces. Such forces must come out in some such marvelous inventions. They do not symbolize the ultimate or the best conquests of mind. What is a minié-rifle compared with the Parthenon? What is a Pacific railroad by the side of Homer's Iliad? What is the army of Marshal von Moltke as an offset to the Laws of Justinian?

The triumphs of material progress are toys and gewgaws in the comparison with those of mind. The true welfare of nations is in the world of Ideas. Its central force is conscience. "The evolution of a highly destined society must be moral. It must run in the grooves of the celestial wheels."

II. Have we, then, any thing in our modern civilization which can rival the great ideas of the ancient world? Yes,—things so many and so grand that they outweigh all the past. Yet they are so inwrought into the warp and woof of our social life, that we are, for the most part, unconscious of them. The rehearsal of them seems like recounting a string of truisms. We live them without knowing it. We of this generation have been born to them: we know no other way. Yet the most of them and the best are mainly the growth of the last three hundred years.

One of these formative ideas, on which modern society is built, is that of the human brotherhood. So trite is it, that our literature indulges in a great

deal of cant about it. But men do not cant about ideas that have nothing grand in them. This idea to the ancient world was as completely unknown as the American continent. One of the silent revolutions which change the face of nations, was that in which the fundamental idea of society was changed from the state to the family. That men of all races, nations, classes, and conditions are brother men, each one responsible for all, and all for each, the equal children of one household whose Father is God, is a theory of society which in its fullness has been the growth of the last two centuries. Now, it is semi-barbarism not to believe it. To go back of it in legislation is like reverting to the Chaldaean astrology in place of the astronomy of Copernicus and Kepler. That astronomy is as likely to become obsolete in our observatories as the idea of brotherhood in our legislation, or in our unwritten social laws. The world took a long stride forward when this idea became fixed in modern jurisprudence.

Another of the creative ideas of modern life is that of individual liberty. When the freedom of class, of tribe, of nation, of race, was exchanged for the freedom of the individual, a great leap was made over the chasm which separates the ancient from the modern world. The chief reason why our fathers found so little in the institutions of Greece and Rome which they could utilize directly in the building of the Republic, was that the Greek and Roman ideas of freedom were so radi-

cally diverse from theirs. Liberty, to the ancient mind, was liberty of race, or nation, or tribe. It involved liberty to enslave another race. England was the first great empire which recognized, ever so dimly, the right of the individual to himself. It was never formally and fully enunciated as the cornerstone of government till the Declaration of Independence, in 1776, proclaimed that all men are *created* free, and have the right to life and liberty. Observe, the right to life was not more sacred in their theory than the right to liberty. Imperfectly as the fathers realized it in the institutions they founded, they did see its reality in theory; and theirs was a modern discovery. As a practical principle of government, to be put to use in the construction of a great republic, it was a new idea. The democratic idea which had germinated long before in the forests of Germany was *not* this American idea.

Our fathers left it for this generation to settle by the right of the strongest, the question of human servitude everywhere. And we have settled it for all time. Never will another state be founded on the right of man to hold property in his brother man. Never will another great war be waged for the principle that a man may be owned and whipped and branded and bought and sold by his fellow like an ox. This idea of individual liberty is fixed in the law of nations beyond the reach of any refluent wave of barbarism.

Kindred to this, and a necessary corollary from

it, is the modern idea of independence in religious belief. It has become a truism in history, that even Puritan faith, so stanch and true to liberty in all things else, could not see the logic of its own principles working out freedom in religion. Its well-known notion of religious liberty was liberty to believe right. To believe wrong, was a crime. Liberty to believe it, was anarchy. It deserved rather the scourge and the branding-iron. That the civil government ought to punish a man for believing falsely, was as plain as a pike-staff to them. Why is it not as plain to us? Because a new and original idea — which, perhaps, John Barneveldt, prime minister of Holland, was the first to enunciate in its completeness, and for which in part he paid the penalty of his life — has now become the common property of the age. How trite is that idea to us, and how much a thing of course! Our children marvel that great men and good men could ever have denied it. That their own ancestors did so, has about the same reality to them as that their ancestors were cannibals. They are horror-struck at Motley's story of the Netherlands, as at the rage of maniacs. A great idea is fixed in history when children are born to it, and can think no otherwise.

Following in the train of the ideas already named, and in necessary alliance with them, is the modern theory of the elevation of woman. Of slow growth, yet as sure as the growth of a coral continent, and as lasting, is this principle of our

most refined and purest civilization. Woman suffrage — that crowing hen — burlesques and retards this reform for a little while ; but it is fast accumulating its trophies in the higher education of woman, in the recognition of her rights of property, in the enlargement of the range of her industrial employments, in just legislation for her in the laws of divorce, in her special pre-eminence in social charities, and, more than all else, in the unwritten social law, by which her companionship with man is established without statute to affirm it, because without a voice denying it.

Yet what a change is this from the Roman ideal of woman to ours ! Imagine such an institution as Smith College in the Rome of the Cæsars ! Cicero has made the name of his daughter, Tullia, immortal by his grief over her death ; but what do we know of Cicero's wives ? Almost nothing, except that he divorced them both by his own sheer will. What immeasurable progress from the *status* of the wife of Augustus Cæsar to that of the wife of President John Adams, or the wife of President Garfield ! From woman the slave, to woman the companion of man ! What a reach of revolution it measures ! And from the Oriental notion of woman, the advance is beyond measure. A Chinese proverb says, "When a daughter is born, she sleeps on the ground. She is incapable of evil and of good." China and America are on opposite sides of the globe in more ways than one.

These are but a few of the representative ideas

of modern life, which show the immensity of human progress in the world of mind. Associated with them, or corollaries from them, are many others. They are such as the recognition of the freedom of the press and of public speech, of a popular literature, of the sacredness of human life, of the criminality of war, of the inferiority of a military life, of the murderous character of the duel, of the dignity of labor, of the equal claims of chastity upon the sexes, of reform in the criminal code, of the inhumanity of torture in courts of justice, of the reformatory element in punishment, of humanity in the treatment of the insane, of the right of animals to protection from cruelty, of gentleness in family government, of the abolition of brutality from public schools and from the discipline of armies and navies, of the disgrace attached to the drinking-usages of society, of the subjection of the sale of intoxicating drinks to law, of the subordination of wealth to character, and of manners to mind in estimating the worth of a man.

To these should be added those germs of ideas, which Hazlitt calls the "tops of thoughts," now just visible above the surface of society, and premonitory of the reforms of the coming age. These suggest, among other things, the sure approach of a more equitable balance of capital and labor, the fixing of limits to the accumulation of private property, and the regulation of its use by the principles of benevolence, and of restrictive legis-

lation against the monopoly of land. They indicate that the time is approaching when it will be a personal disgrace to a man to be possessor of a property, the magnitude of which is itself evidence that it is an injustice or a menace to the common welfare.

Here is a resplendent galaxy of ideas which light up the modern firmament. The whole heavens are aglow with them. They prove a world in forward and upward movement. The clockwork of the sidereal universe is not more certain. They are ideas, also, which create great men for their development. When the world is ripe for a truth, that truth ripens in some elect mind, one or more, whose mission it is to tell it. Every such truth creates its own prophet. More than this: it makes all men great who accept it, by the use of that which is on a level with their immortality.

Great formative and reformatory ideas, it should also be observed, once born into the world, never die. They come into it to stay. Power can not crush them: time can not wear them out. The destructions of nations never bury them in the *débris*, like those works of immortal art which till lately were buried under the soil of Rome. The conflagration of all libraries could not burn them out of the world's thought. Arts are lost: ideas, never. So long as one man lives to think them, they will sway the civilization of the future. The look of things sometimes threatens them. The world rolls backward, and seems about to crush

out its history. But occult forces hold it in the grooves of progress.

Furthermore, these creative thoughts are from one source, and ultimately from only one. In their fullness, and in forms fitting them for use in practical affairs, they all spring from the religion of Christ. In every age, those truths which have moved the world, and have made the world move of itself, have been religious truths, or truths born of religious intuitions. Every thing great springs from conscience. All our civilization is wrapped up in the Lord's Prayer. The world never gets to the circumference of the central lesson of a Christian nursery.

It was quite in the natural course of things, that, on the night before the "Emancipation Act" went into operation in the West Indies, the slaves—chattels to-day, men to-morrow—should crowd their churches and chapels at midnight, to greet the first hour of their liberty with songs of praise and prayer to the Most High. Their simple faith taught them better than statesmen knew, from whence their redemption came. They must needs render back the boon to Him who gave it.

Never was a cannon fired for liberty which had not a religious thought behind it. Never was a bill of human rights fought for with success which had not somewhere for its preamble a bill of human duties. The word "ought" is the supreme word in all languages. It is the sovereign of all ideas. Two thousand years ago Plato discovered that "piety is necessary to knowledge."

When Clarkson first laid before William Pitt the argument for emancipation in the West Indies, he says, "Many sublime thoughts seemed to rush into his mind." Sublime thoughts always rush into the wake of one great moral idea. It takes but a few such ideas to make a history of a thousand years. So is it now. These principles on which the noblest modern life is constructed are the direct outgrowth from the Christian faith. Underneath them are the Christian doctrines of the personality and the fatherhood of God, the immortality of the soul, the unity and brotherhood of the race, a universal atonement, and the freedom of the human will. Blot out these doctrines from the religion of the few, to whom they are a personal faith, and you obliterate in the end, from the civilization of the many, the great creative forces which have made that civilization what it is. Then chaos comes again.

Yes: the world does move. It did move in the ancient ages. It is moving in these times of ours. Whatever the surface-currents may seem to indicate, the lower depths of modern thought are moving Godward, beyond the reach of counter-currents. They have gained a momentum into the still waters of faith which no possible re-actionary forces can counter-check.

One fact out of a score like it gathers into itself a volume of proofs of this. Look at the postal service of the world. Our very children sport with it, and their fathers use it with little or no

thought of what it means. It is reported that the letters dispatched to and fro through the post-offices of the nations during the year 1884 numbered fifty-two thousand millions. What a power of mind that represents, in what magnificent movement! What had the Greek civilization to compare with it? What had the Roman? Then, what significance it carries! It means intelligence; it means mental activity; it means alert and intricate thinking; it means faith; it means the flowing of all the great ideas which the past has generated into the world of the future. Dark ages can never come again.

## XIX.

### IS THE CHRISTIAN LIFE WORTH LIVING?

RICHARD BAXTER was a lifelong sufferer. Incurable disease kept him for years at death's door. "I live with one foot in the grave," he used to say. For twenty years he probably did not know the sensations of health. The jubilant spring of life in other men became a forgotten joy to him. As if this were not enough, he was persecuted for his religion. For preaching five sermons he was condemned to imprisonment for five years. Sermons were costly luxuries in those days,—a year of prison-life for each one! He escaped only by the interposition of his physician, who swore that the execution of the sentence would cost him his life.

Not a very fascinating life this, to the looker-on! We should not have thought him querulous against the providence of God, if he had been the author of an essay published not long ago, entitled, "Is Life Worth Living?" But the invalid and persecuted preacher published no such thing as that. He had no time to ask or answer such a question. He *was* living, and he made the best of it by living to some purpose. He published a hundred and forty-five distinct works in the intervals of his

pains. He was one of the busiest of men, as, indeed, Christian invalids have commonly been.

Of all men in the world, he was the one who was moved to write “The Saint’s Rest.” And so understandingly did he write of it, that to a million of readers since his day, it has seemed as if he must have had a foretaste of the heavenly blessedness himself. It is supposed that nearly half a million of copies of that book have been published, and the popular verdict upon it has everywhere been the same. It is one of the few books so profoundly written from the heart, that their insight into truth borders on inspiration.

Dante wrote of purgatory so feelingly, that people, meeting him on the street, used to say, “There goes the man who has been in hell.” To Baxter’s million readers, it has seemed that he must have been on the other side of the “great gulf.” Such are the contrasts and contradictions of Christian living. Suffering men are the happiest men. Women on beds of anguish sing most honestly our hymns of Christian triumph. Men in prisons know most of Christian liberty. People who have least of this world, have most luminous foresight of heaven. Sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; poor, yet making many rich; having nothing, yet possessing all things; such ideally is the privilege of holy living.

St. Paul appears to have been another of the great Christian contradictions. As one reads his autobiography, it does seem to lend reason to the

conundrum, “Is life worth living?” He is a man of bold nerve who would select St. Paul’s life as a model of his own. On the human scale of measurement, the apostle can not be pronounced a happy man. He was not hilarious in his temperament. He did not sing many comic songs. Men who do, can not make much of him. The world would not call his life a lucky one. It went hard with him at the best. What a history of ill-luck he gives us! Flogged like a slave in the market-place five times, and three times in court; shipwrecked three times; pelted with stones by vagabonds till he was left for dead; in prisons so many that he does not count them; hungry, cold, thirsty, naked, robbed; hunted by murderers, with nothing but a wicker basket between him and death; betrayed by friends whom he trusted and prayed for; in the city, in the country, in the wilderness, on the sea, everywhere in the wide world, beset by dangers; always guiltless, yet always an outlaw; he was saved at last from being clothed with pitch, and used as a candle to light the streets of Rome, by having his head cut off. And as if the cruelty of man were not enough, he must find the Devil on his track, and must put to hazard body and soul in fight with invisible foes, more ferocious than the beasts of Ephesus.

No: this “bald-pated Galilean,” as Lucian contemptuously calls him, was not a lucky man. I have somewhere read of a man who, on a journey of many weeks, encountered a continuous succes-

sion of accidents. He fell through broken bridges, he was buried under a wrecked rail-car, he was caught in a mountain freshet, highway robbers assailed him, a stray pistol-shot grazed his cheek, runaway horses threatened his life, a bolt of lightning splintered the tree under which he sought shelter in a shower. At last, in the final stage of his journey, some of his fellow-passengers, on hearing his story, declared that a curse was on him; a malign fate was after him; he would surely die of it; and they hurried out of the car where they had found him. They would not risk their lives in company with a man whom a legion of fiends pursued so malignantly. So, judging in the world's way, we should say of this old Jew of Tarsus, that "the stars in their courses fought against" him. He was born to misfortune; and wise men, who valued their lives, would fight shy of him.

Yet, of all men in the world, this man is the one to say, "I will glory in my infirmities." This hunted and outlawed "babbler," as the wise men of Athens called him, is the man to tell us what a blessed thing life is, how grandly worth living, what a good fight it is, full of what magnificent chances, what a precious thing suffering is, and what an imperial coronation glorifies it at the end. This is the man who goes to his grave exultingly, and celebrates a victory over death! Can we not hear his ringing voice, as he flings the gantlet to the great enemy,—O Death, where is thy sting? O Grave, where is thy victory? He really seems

to have been one of the happiest of men, yet one of the most illustrious of sufferers. Where in all history shall we find his peer,—his peer in sorrow, his peer in joy?

What is the secret of it all? Christian history is full of such contradictions. Unwritten biography abounds with them. Men and women are now living such lives in secret. The world does not know them, and never will while time lasts. But they are a great multitude, whom no man can number. Not that there are many Baxters, nor do St. Pauls come in crowds. But there is an innumerable host of plain men and women, and children even, whose lives do approximate and honestly claim rank with illustrious saints. Martyrs, as a class, have been the most cheerful of men. This is the Christian theory of living,—that such life is a victory, not a conflict only, and least of all is it a losing fight. The “Saint’s Rest” begins here. Baxter told in plain words what he knew. Conquest of death, and triumph over the grave, are initiated here in ten thousand Christian homes. The psalm of life, as it is sung at countless firesides, is a jubilant one. On beds of pain, the songs of Zion are most exultant.

This is the Christian ideal of life. But what is the secret of it? Can a man enjoy pain? Does God expect us to be happy on a rack? Are thumb-screws and Scotch “boots” playthings? Is crucifixion a comedy? An old legend tells of a species of animals which live in fire. They dance on

burning coals. They gambol in a furnace at white-heat. Are men and women made of stuff so sympathetic with fire? We, who are not Baxters and St. Pauls, but only men of common sort, want a solution of the mystery. Some men are weary—very weary—of life, or, what is the same thing to them, they think they are; and they need the solution desperately. In the watches of the night they cry out, “Oh that I had the wings of a dove!”

But disconsolate views of life are not the product of healthy Christian living. The protest which some assert against their own creation without their own consent is profane. No wise man will foster such moods in himself. They are a mental weakness and a moral wrong. The Bible is a manly book. It cherishes an athletic piety. When the angel directed Lot’s flight from Sodom, he did his best to persuade the old man to seek refuge on the mountain-top. Only by concession to age and fright was he permitted to rest in the lowlands. This is emblematic of that type of religion which the Bible fosters. It enjoins the difficult duty, encourages the arduous achievement, exhorts to the aspiring aim, inspires the buoyant hope, makes men stout in crises. It puts into a man’s religion the old feudal element of chivalry. On the same principle, it withholds sympathy from cowardly views of life and the chronic desire for death. It was Christianity which first made suicide infamous.

The Scriptures do not encourage, even an habitual meditation on death. They lend no sanction

to that monastic life in which men kept a human skull always in sight. Christianity never built the "Church of St. Ursula and the Eleven Thousand Virgins" at Cologne, in which the walls are made of the virgins' skulls, and glass cases are filled with them in ghastly rows around the choir. They have no word of sympathy for men who build their coffins before the time, and store them in their chambers. Emerson tells of a woman who for years made up her bed every morning in the shape of a coffin, and regaled her fancy with the discovery that the tower of a church near by threw its shadow in the figure of a coffin on the sidewalk every evening. God would have no such beggarly piety as this among men and women of His creating. In such a world as this, we should be too busy to make a hobby of dying. We should think of it, only enough to be prepared to meet it calmly when it comes, and to look at the life beyond as a progress. The majority of thoughtful men think too much about it.

The desire for death is commonly a counterfeit. Men do not know their own minds when they think death would be welcome, and is long in coming. Men who talk in that strain are not conscious hypocrites; but they fight for dear life when the need comes, like the rest of us. One such man, at the age of ninety, said that he should be glad to die; but he wanted to live till he was an *old* man. Men who ask with a sneer whether life is worth living, if wrecked at sea, swim if they

can. If attacked by Asiatic cholera, they send for a physician, choose the best expert, and send a fleet horse for him. If threatened with consumption, they cross the sea in search of more salubrious climes. I have observed, too, that men who fling insult at their Creator for giving them an existence they never asked for, do not take kindly to annihilation.

Even the mental habits of good men sometimes need a correction of *perspective* in their ideas. I once knew a clergyman whose mind was inordinately intent on heaven. It was the favorite theme of his sermons. His prayers often seemed to be an inspiration from thence. His favorite hymns were descriptive of the better world. In conversation, he dwelt much upon its employments and discoveries. He used to imagine his interviews with prophets and apostles. He made up his mind who should be the first object of his search among them. He lived at the gates of the New Jerusalem, and they appeared to be ajar to his vision. I thought to myself, that it would be an easy thing for him to die. He gave a beautiful example, as many thought, of what the Scriptures mean when they say, "Let your conversation be in heaven!" I anticipated, that, in his last hours, he would have visions of the place, and hear music in the air, as some dying saints do.

When the time came, however, he had no visions, he heard no songs of angelic rapture. He died of a painful, lingering disease, but, through it all,

never expressed a desire to go. On the contrary, he was one of the most resolute invalids I ever knew, in his determination to live. He lived for years on his will-power. He sought health, as other men do, at every cost. If Heaven then seemed to him the more attractive world, he never said it to his friends. His favorite Scriptures then were not those descriptive of heaven, nor were his favorite hymns such. And at last he died, one of the silent saints.

No man knows, or ought to judge, the inner life of another. There was much that was beautiful and inspiring in the life of that man in his days of health. Yet I suspect that his closing years were, as a whole, more natural and truthful. There was less glamour about them. Probably he was a better man in his desire to live, than in his old dreams of hastening to see the prophets and apostles. He ought to have desired to live, and to have done his best to prolong life. The real man, the inner core of character, probably came to light in his faithful performance of that duty. If he could meet the end trustfully, as he did, it was not his business to hasten it by so much as a wish. While he lived, it was his duty to live. One of the most godly things he ever did, to the admiration of ministering angels, may have been the exercise of that splendid will-power in the struggle for life, which he would not relax one jot.

The Christian ideal of life is health, not disease. The beauty of holiness is never hectic. Healthy

hopes, healthy desires, healthy aims, healthy prayers, healthy work, healthy retrospects,—these are Christian living. The Christ-like ideal consists rather in the will-power than in moods of feeling. The concentration of the strength of a man upon the opportunities and resources which this world gives for use in great endeavor, is more Scriptural and more natural than going into hiding in the chambers of an invalid piety, and there waiting for death. In such a life, we are nearer to the life of God. We find no time to ask, Is life worth living? and we have as little disposition as time.

Let us not overlook here the fact that God does not sit aloft in remote and inaccessible seclusion from our human woes. They are more real to God than they are to us. No being in the universe feels the pains of human life so deeply as He feels them. Not one pang of suffering rasps any human nerve, which God does not appropriate as if it were His own. This is the working of infinite sympathies in the heart of a loving Creator. “In all their affliction, He was afflicted.” Yet over and above the billows of human sorrow, the blessedness of God remains intact. In those very sorrows, He finds cause of joy, because they are the instruments of His own benevolence. They have never taken Him by surprise. He has made no mistakes in them; nor has He ever permitted one of them which He could not use, to more loving purpose than He could use ease and comfort and indulgence in its place. He is blessed, therefore, not only in

spite of them, but *in* them. And the principle of Christian living is, that what God enjoys we can enjoy.

For example, the works of God, the Word of God, the plans of God in redemption, His purposes in the development of a Christian civilization, His joy in Christ, His delight in His own perfections, His outflow of benevolence to the holy universe, His complacency in the reciprocated love of angels and men, and whatever other orders of being may people space, His beneficent vigilance over human sorrows, His foresight and decree of their fruits in building character,—all these objective tributaries to the great ocean of felicity which fills the heart of God are equally fitted to be tributary to ours. Why not? Are we not made in God's image? Are we not like Him in our better nature? Why not like Him, then, in our resources which make life worth living?

True, all this implies that we are something more than creatures of sense. We belong to another genus than that of mammalia. We have other faculties than the five which physiologists count. We are beings of thought, of faith, of illimitable desires, of aspirations which penetrate eternity. It implies that we ought not to be, and can not be, satisfied with pleasures of sense. Satiated we may be, but not satisfied. There is an antipodal difference between the two. A man whose supreme enjoyments are in fine houses and costly furnishings, and tasteful grounds, and rich

conservatories, and fleet horses, and the master-pieces of fine art, and the thousand and one things which make up the possibly innocent pleasures of a sensuous millionaire, is sure to weary of it all in the end. Such men often desire, or think they desire, to die. They are the men who talk most glibly of "the great Perhaps." Suicides are not found mainly, or chiefly, among the miserably poor.

Sensuous men have a revolution to undergo before they can understand what a grand thing life is as a life of godlike opportunity. New tastes must come uppermost in their nature. They are living on the under side of the universe. Occult realities must be revealed to them. They must come up into the life of Christ. Wings must grow.

Even a life which, though preponderantly right, lacks fullness and intensity in its sympathy with the life of God, as the lives of most men do, will declare the ascendancy of discomfort in the retrospect at the end. The testimony of the ages to such an imperfect life is given in the words of the patriarch, "Few and evil have been the days."

The elder President Adams in his ninetieth year said, "I have lived a long, harassed, and distracted life." When a friend suggested, "The world thinks a good deal of joy has been mixed with it," he responded, "The world does not know how much toil, anxiety, and sorrow I have suffered." Is there no remedy for this never-ending contra-

diction between the memory of a prosperous life and its seeming to observers? Does it exist in any other world than this? Carlyle expressed it in his savage way, "The ground of my existence is as black as death." John Foster says of himself, "Something seems to say to me, 'Come away! Come away!' I am but a gloomy ghost among the living and the happy." And his father used for twenty years before his death to pray on every New-Year's Day, that the coming year might be his last. What is it that such men need? Something surely is awry with them. God never meant that men should live "gloomy ghosts" on "ground as black as death." Who can disclose to us the great secret?

Physicians have a short way of settling the matter. They tell us to get rid of dyspepsia. "Obey nature's laws, and get health, and things will right themselves!" As if a *man* were nothing but stomach and spleen, such as they preserve in alcohol! But suppose we can not be rid of dyspepsia. What then? Must every diseased man be miserable? Must the decline of life be the decline of every thing that makes one desire life? A genuine soul, possessed of a genuine sympathy with the life of God, need never see the hour when death shall be desirable. The apostolic idea means just what it says, "Rejoice in the Lord always!" It is a practicable idea to any man who will give Christianity a chance to do what it can for him.

Carlyle would have been a happier man if his manhood had realized to him more profoundly the faith of his childhood as his mother taught it to him. He would have made his home more serene to his disconsolate wife. The mother in her nursery was wiser than the wise man of whom the world stood in awe. Let God be as real to a man as an excruciated eyeball, and the excruciated eyeball will become a myth. Many times Christian martyrdom has proved this.

I know there seems to be an exasperating unreality in such a notion of life as this. We are not martyrs. We have not the faith of martyrs. So we put it to ourselves in honest thought, and we wish preachers would talk like men of the world. This "life of God" is very high up, and very far away. We look up to find it, and we see nothing but mocking stars. Scientists tell us that we should freeze to death before we could reach the nearest of them. That seems to us an emblem of our vain attempts to realize this hidden life.

Yet this Christian ideal contains nothing impracticable to common men in common life. If we have not the faith of martyrs, neither are we called to the life of martyrs. The faith practicable to us is adequate to the life we are appointed to live. The grace and calling balance each other.

The Rev. William Jay of Bath, England, has left on record one of the most healthful reminiscent views of life which it has been my privilege to meet with. It is so apt an answer to the ques-

tion, “Is life worth living?” and so pertinent an offset to the desire for death which some good men feel, that it is worth transcribing. After a laborious pastorate of fifty years, he writes, “I have heard many express the sentiment of Cowper,—

“‘Worlds would not bribe me back to tread  
Again life’s dreary waste,  
To see the future overspread  
With all the dreary past.’

Such language is not for me. I should not shrink from the prospect of repetition. My duties have not been irksome. My trials have been few compared with my comforts. My condition has been the happy medium between poverty and riches. I do not believe that in this earth misery preponderates over good. I have a better opinion of mankind than when I began public life: I can not ask what is the cause that the former days were better than these. I do not believe the fact itself. God has not been throwing away duration on the human race. The state of the world *has* been improving, *is* improving. Blessed are our eyes for what they see, and our ears for what they hear.”

This is Christian *health* in an old man’s retrospect of life. It illustrates what Christianity can do for a man in forming his judgments of men, and bringing him *en rapport* with the providence of God. Such a man can never bury himself in monastic meditation upon another man’s skull, or a morbid longing to get rid of his own. Such a

man will never ask the question, “Is life worth living?” It is for such men as Voltaire and Thomas Paine to cry as they did, “Oh that I had never been born!” For Christian believers remains the Pauline vision which discloses in both worlds such magnificent opportunity to be and to do, that we can not make choice between them.

Say what men may of it, there *is* such a thing as living in sympathy with God. There are men who *know* it. It is the most real thing that is, in any man’s life. It is the province of Christianity to make it a common reality to common men. The fruit of it is to make men participants of the life that God lives. His will becomes ours, His plans ours, His look into the future ours, His joys ours. Our whole being is held in trust by His eternal choice. The most ignorant and sensuous of us, those of most wooden indurated natures, are called of God to this lofty and pure alliance. We may become one with Him, as Christ was and is. Is not such a life worth living?

Jeremy Taylor, the illustrious preacher at Golden Grove, himself a suffering, and sometimes persecuted, believer, in a sermon on a theme kindred to the one before us, after enumerating vividly life’s trials, says, “They have taken all from me. What now? Let me look about me. Unless I list, they have not taken away my merry countenance, and my cheerful spirit, and my good conscience. They still have left me God’s providence, and Christ’s

promises, and my religion, and my hopes of Heaven. I can delight in all that in which God delights, and in God Himself. He that hath so many causes of joy, and so great, must be very much in love with sorrow, who loses all these treasures, and chooses to sit down on his little handful of thorns.”

## XX.

### A STUDY OF THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH.

#### PART I.

IT has been wisely said, that no belief conscientiously held by large bodies of men, and wrought into institutions which have a history, *can* be utterly false. Such is the make of mind as related to truth, and of truth as related to mind, that, on the large scale, they must discover each other.

This principle underlies the divisions of the Church into denominational sections. Every denomination is what it is through certain inborn affinities, in which it differs from the rest. It represents some truth, or phase of truth, or proportions, shadings, combinations of truth, which other denominations do not represent with equal authority. Every denomination lives, therefore, because it must live. In the divine order of things, it has a call to live. It is a spoke in the wheel which is needful to the completeness of the circle and the safety of its revolutions. Every denomination, therefore, has its mission. In some things, it is wiser than its peers. We lose one of the divinely ordained means of Christian culture if we are too lofty to learn of each other.

The rise of the great Christian sects marks epochs in Protestant history. They were the products of great agitations. Sometimes they were signs of great discoveries, for which the world was waiting. Again, they indicated great revivals of an expiring faith. What would the English-speaking churches of to-day have been but for the rise of Methodism? Even the secular history of England was revolutionized to an extent which has molded the destiny of the empire, by the rise of the Independents in the Church.

A friendly study of the Episcopal Church discloses certain dominant *ideas*, which we who cherish Puritan traditions may with profit add to our stock of wisdom. One of those ideas is that of the dignity of worship. Other denominations are its superiors in appreciating the dignity of the pulpit. But of Christian worship, no other branch of the Church universal has so lofty an ideal as the Church of England and its offshoot in this country. In all the liturgic literature of our language, nothing equals the Anglican Litany. Its variety of thought, its spiritual pathos, its choice selection of the most vital themes of prayer, its reverent importunity, its theological orthodoxy, and its exquisite propriety of style, will commend it to the hearts of devout worshipers of many generations to come, as they have done to generations past. For an equipoise of balanced virtues, it is unrivaled. Its union of intensity with simplicity will go far to protect its use from the danger

of formalism, to which all fixed liturgies are exposed.

The liturgical forms of other denominations would be saved from some excrescences and inanities if the venerable Book of Common Prayer were more generally revered as a model. In the stock of clerical anecdote, which contributes so largely to the comicalities of the newspapers, the infirmities of extemporaneous prayer hold an unfortunate pre-eminence. Their repellent influence on cultured minds is mournful. The growing taste among us for responsive worship, and for the alternation of prescribed with extemporaneous forms of devotion, is a healthful one. With the increase of culture, in large communities especially, the demand must grow for such improvements upon our ancient ways. A valuable portion of the constituency most germane to our Puritan churches will seek them elsewhere if we do not provide them ourselves.

Nearly allied with an appreciation of the dignity of worship, is another idea, in honor of which the Church of England sets a commendable example. It is that of the sacredness of the House of God.

Democracy is not friendly to reverence for places. Many of our churches are, in this respect, more democratic than religious. Our revolt from pilgrimages and shrines and sacred relics has swung us over to the antipodes, in which we scarcely recognize any thing material as more venerable than another thing. Science settles the question.

Are they not all resolvable into imponderable gases? We are but just beginning to know what church architecture is. In one thing, we have not outlived the barbarian age. Some among us still prefer to see, surmounting our church-spires, a horrible satire on our faith, in the form of a weather-vane or a cockerel, rather than the golden cross, its only proper symbol, if we have any.

What shall we say of the *uses* to which we often put our places of worship? In rural parishes, their doors are often open to town-meetings and strolling lecturers. In the vestibule of one church was once posted a notice, humbly requesting that shells of peanuts and expectorations of tobacco should not be left upon the carpeted floor. Not long ago a raffle for a sewing-machine was held in the auditorium, and the conditions were announced glibly from the pulpit. Church-fairs around and on the sacramental table are too old a story to bear recital. It is a grief to reverent taste, that the basements of our sacred edifices should be devoted to commercial uses. One instance I have known, in which worshipers assembled on the Lord's Day through a darkened passage, flanked on either side by a grocery and a provision store. The atmosphere they breathed on a Sunday morning was redolent with cheese and raw beef.

The climax of this semi-barbarism was reached in a church in the city of Boston. It could not be excused on the score of the simplicity of rural taste. The pastor and some of his congregation

were models of refinement and Christian reverence. On a sabbath morning in midsummer, the audience were mysteriously seized, in the midst of the service of song, with a paroxysm of uncontrollable sneezing. First the children, then the choir, and at length nearly the whole assembly, the preacher included, broke out into that involuntary convulsion which a former president of Harvard College once protested that he had not perpetrated in the presence of another for seventeen years. It was as if they had regaled themselves with the *heleinum autumnale*, popularly known as "sneeze-weed." Did ever American savage or African Hottentot bring such an offering to his gods? When the premises were searched by the astounded sexton amidst the cachinnations of the boys, the cause of the ridiculous catastrophe was found to be a cargo of *pepper*, which, during the previous week, had been stored in the cellar. The enterprising trustees had rented the place to a wholesale grocer. They thus eked out the salary of the pastor and the wages of the sexton.

Since the foregoing paragraph was written, I have been informed of an incident which indicates that there is a climax above the "climax." It appears that a church in Philadelphia was for several years burdened with current expenses beyond receipts; and, to supply the deficit, the trustees leased the basement to a wholesale brewery for the storage of *beer*. A preacher who once occupied the pulpit, testifies that the fumes from the beer-

barrels were very perceptible to the congregation on the Lord's Day.

There is a certain old Book in which it is written, "Incense is an abomination unto Me." Was not that prophetic, since prophecy often has a double sense, of those Philadelphia beer-barrels? One hardly knows whether to condole with, or to congratulate, that church, that their economical thrift did not save them from bankruptcy. The sooner the auctioneer's hammer falls on such an edifice, the better. The Lord never owned it: the brewer had the better claim.

Illustrations of this evil multiply *ad nauseam*. In a thriving city of Connecticut, then one of the dual capitals of the State, a benevolent tailor — I think he was — was once applied to for a subscription to the building of a church. He responded with great alacrity. He said that he would *give* the building-lot himself. The countenances of the committee brightened. He went on to explain, saying that he was about to build a new store for his increasing business, and that he would build one story, and the church was "welcome to all above that, upward to Heaven." The *usage* of the churches he was familiar with had not suggested to him a doubt that his benevolent offer would be gratefully accepted.

Are such uncivilized associations ever found connected with an Episcopal Church? If so, it has not been my misfortune to meet them there. If, on entering a New-England village, your eye

falls on a place of worship more comely than the rest in architecture, and free from unchurchly accompaniments, do you not know, without asking, to what denomination of worshipers it belongs? Grant that Episcopal usage sometimes crowds its churchly reverence to an extreme; but is not that a safer extreme than ours? We would not imitate the scruple of Dr. Johnson, who lifted his hat when he passed a church in the street; but we would rather do it than to wear the hat from the pew to the vestibule. The educating influence of this sentiment on children of the Church is of untold value. One of the most difficult of the Christian virtues to instill into youthful character is that of reverence. The place where God dwells is its natural auxiliary.

The value of the House of the Lord for this purpose must increase as our country grows old, and its temples of worship become venerable with hundreds of years. They should be built, if possible, with stone, that they may defy the ravages of fire and of time. The recollections of the experiences of childhood in the House of God may then be among the most precious treasures of Christian culture. They may come back in after-years, "trailing clouds of glory." They make the very walls eloquent above all human speech. The stone cries out of the wall, and the beam out of the timber answers it. That instinct of our nature which reveres the place where God's honor dwells, is no fiction. God has not wrought a false-

hood or a frivolity into the very make of the human mind in creating it. The intuitions of the race have expressed it through all history.

This reverence for the place where the distance seems to be lessened between man and God is surely scriptural. Remember Jacob's dream of converse with angels, "How dreadful is this place! The Lord is here, and I knew it not!" Recall the night which he spent under the open sky, when in his troubled sleep he seemed to wrestle with a mysterious stranger, and calls the spot Peniel. For he says, "I have seen God face to face!" The biblical narrative of the building of the Temple represents it as a place of singular and awful sanctity. "I have *hallowed* this place, to put my name there." The House of God must be made "exceeding magnifical, of fame and glory throughout all countries." The wisest of monarchs summoned to its erection the most accomplished architects of the age. So sacred was it, that it must be built without noise. No hammer nor ax, nor "any tool of iron," must resound in it. It must grow in silence, as the forests grow.

Such is the Scriptural idea of the holiness of the House of the Lord. "The holy place; the place where My honor dwelleth; the gate of Heaven." So the Bible portrays in brief its unutterable sanctity. Picture a church-fair in the Temple of Jerusalem! Conceive of a raffle for a gold-headed cane, or a Chickering piano, in the "Holy of holies!" Imagine the humdrum of an auction-

sale of the fag-ends of the fair from the altar of sacrifice! Do not such things remind us of One who, on a memorable occasion, found a use for "a whip of small cords"?

The views here advanced must be held within bounds. We must not insist on the impracticable. Spiritual necessity knows no law of good taste. Leeway must be given and taken for the straits of pioneer churches in infant settlements. There, worshipers have often to remind themselves that the Christian Church began in an "upper room." It has often sheltered itself in caves and dens, in forests and catacombs, and by the sea at low tide. It must now often find a temporary home in halls and schoolhouses, in log-cabins and barn-lofts. One of the most helpful services of an Episcopal Church that I ever attended was held in a ball-room. In such unchurchly surroundings, a genuine Church of Christ can compete successfully with a corrupt one in gothic cathedrals under a vaulted roof, amidst memorial windows and massive pillars. Any place is *made* sacred by the worship of the living God by living souls.

But the thing we plead for is, that, in the older settlements, the House of God should be in keeping with the civilization around it. In cities, where all the other tokens of high culture abound, let the Christian Temple be "exceeding magnifical." In thriving towns, where men build for themselves elegant and costly homes, let the home of their worship be churchly in itself and its accompani-

ments. That is a mistaken economy which would retrench expense on the House of the Lord for charity's sake. The story of the alabaster box settles that question for all time. Nothing is extravagant which is honestly expended for the love of Christ.

We have something yet to learn of the rudiments of biblical worship. Our Episcopal brethren are farther advanced than we in this line of Christian culture. That is a becoming, because a natural and sensible, act of reverence, in which they begin and end the services of public worship by kneeling, or bowing the head in silent prayer. Their bishops exercise a most valuable authority in withholding consecration from a church burdened with debt. They are right in refusing to offer to the Most High a treasure over which the auctioneer's hammer is suspended.

That was a refined Christian feeling, whatever may be said of it as a sanitary error, which led our fathers to bury their dead, and erect tombs for themselves, underneath the temples in which they and their godly ancestry had worshiped, or, better still, in the cheerful "God's acre" around them. They would be at hand when the morning dawned. Reason about the theology of it as we may, who can help sympathizing with the sentiment? The man who can stand in the Campo Santo at Pisa, only to jeer at the faith which has transported thither earth from the Holy Land to create a resting-place for the dead, is none the

better for it. Many things which we would not do now, we may well respect in the usage of a former age. They may be things which, in other forms, ought to perpetuate their spiritual meaning in this brazen age of ours.

## XXI.

### A STUDY OF THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH.

#### PART II.

THE Church of England, and the American off-shoot from it, have been wisely conservative of one idea, to which our Puritan traditions are not very friendly, and yet which, for that reason, we greatly need to incorporate into our ideal of the Christian Church. It is that of the unity, and the consequent moral authority, of the Church. We have drifted to a perilous extreme in our passionate zeal for individuality in religious life. It often degenerates into individualism. Then the sequence is inevitable, that eccentric and crochety believers, and unbelievers as well, who can find a home nowhere else, steal one from a Congregational Church. This is vanity and vexation of spirit. We have contended, not too stoutly perhaps, but altogether too singly, for the liberty of *a* church, as contrasted with the authority of *the* Church. Our inherited faith, in this respect, is truthful; but it is not all the truth. A principle lies over against it. That principle our Lord hallowed in the closing scenes of his life: "That they all may be *one*."

By just so much as we undervalue churchly unity, do we lose our sense of churchly authority. There is a moral power which nothing else creates in numbers compacted and unified. This power is the legitimate prerogative of the Church of Christ. A church can possess but an infinitesimal fraction of it, and that often infinitesimal in results. But *the Church, the temple of the Spirit of God,* is well-nigh omnipotent. In no other development is the principle absolutely true, "*Vox populi vox Dei.*" Our plans of church extension suffer for the want of the unifying principle as a check upon disintegration. In the moral as in the material universe, there are twin forces of centripetal and centrifugal attraction. Either alone works ruin: both in union create order and beauty.

The Church of England does good service for us all in conserving this churchly idea without crowding it to the tyranny of the Romish hierarchy. After all that we have said, and must say to every generation, in resistance to ecclesiastical despotism, there is, even in ecclesiastical despotism, an underlying truth which no large body of believers can afford to part with. Divine life is concentrated in one true and living Church. That article in the Apostle's Creed, "I believe in the Holy Catholic Church," has more than apostolic authority. It is the word of God. It represents the power which is to convert this world to Christ.

When this idea of churchly authority is presented in its biblical simplicity, the common sense

of men approves it. Under right conditions, the world reveres it. On a certain occasion, an immense meeting of Chartists was held in London. They had been wrought up almost to ferocity by the atheistic abuse which had been heaped upon the Christianity of the age. Charles Kingsley made his way through the crowd to the platform; and, folding his arms till he could command a hearing, he uttered these simple words, "I am a clergyman of the Church of England and — a Chartist." The bold committal of the Church to the welfare of the laboring people awed the angry assembly into silence. Their ears were open to any thing which the athletic churchman could say to them. He corrected them, rebuked them, proved their mistakes, denounced their vices, heaped scorn upon their crimes, and flung the gauntlet to their ungodly leaders; and they listened to it all like children. They felt that he had the right to say it, as no other man than a Christian minister could have. He spoke as one having authority. Behind his words and him was the great body of Christian believers of all ages, which Christ had hallowed by His own name.

It is almost impossible to overestimate the prestige which this churchly idea has given to the Church of England in the civilization of the English people. With all its defects,—and honest churchmen know that these are not few nor small,—still that church has more to show than any other Protestant sect, of humble, effective service

in humanizing, comforting, educating, Christianizing, the masses of the English people. I have mentioned the name of Charles Kingsley. He is as good a representative as any one of hundreds of others, of a self-denying country-parson, consecrated to his work as a minister of God to the poor and the lowly. Where can we find a better model?

But for the spiritual elements which the Church has built into the foundations of the English Government, that government could not exist a year. We democrats marvel at the loyalty of the English people to a system of government which is unequal, unnatural, in some respects tyrannical. To our sharp republican eye, they appear stupid in their blind allegiance. But it is no mystery when we give due weight to one thing. Every Englishman from his infancy upward has heard prayers offered for the queen, the royal family, and the parliament of the realm. The government is associated with all that he reveres as the representative of God. That infinite idea which the word "Law" embodies, exists in the concrete to an Englishman's conscience, as it seldom does to that of a republican. Loyalty is a more profound sentiment than mere submission. At the bottom, it is a religious sentiment. It is the voice of conscience.

This it is which has kept alive the English Government, though rocking on the billows of threatened revolution, for a thousand years. And it is the work of the English Church. It is not easy for men to lay violent hands on that for which

they have been praying all their life long. Some element must be eliminated from their life-blood before they will do it. It is like the death-blow of a parricide upon his mother. I repeat, the principle of reverence runs through the warp and woof of England's civilization, and her ancient church has put it there. She owes it to the poor, burnt hand of Cranmer. With all her national defects and follies and crimes, England is a blessing to the world. That will be a sad day for mankind when she falls, if fall she must, from the summit of nations. It is not yet proved that we of the new world have any thing to offer which can take her place as a civilizing and Christianizing power to the nations. And, if we have, the best of it is our inheritance from England. We are but a *New England* in our mission to the world. We are but the offspring of a venerable Mother: our churches are but the offshoots of the Mother-church. The churchly idea is as necessary to us as to her.

True, the idea of the individuality of the soul, which it has been our mission to develop, is equally potent. We will not be faithless to it. But, in our zeal for it, we have been too oblivious of the twin-idea represented by the church as a unit. These two ideas are correlatives. Either works ruin without the other. The churchly sentiment has special power in the forming of popular opinions. It is a most essential force in every wise reform. Rid it of the pettiness of formalism,

and the abuses of despotism, and the craft of priesthood, and it is the most potent lever of reform that history has known. The world will never be truly reformed till it is converted to Christ; and it will never be converted to Christ, except by means and methods which bring to the front the Church of Christ. Christ lives in his Church. Every generation creates its voluntary organizations, which aim to do the work, and represent the principles, for which the Church exists; but they all work at disadvantage, because they do not represent Christ. In the end, they all become effete, and pass away. The Church is the only representative of associated and compacted benevolence which has a destiny of conquest.

The Church of England, furthermore, does good service in the conservation of the idea of the historic continuity of the Church. We can not defer to her claim of apostolic succession as any more valid than our own. Yet in her articles of faith, and in her forms of worship, as well as in her years, she represents a venerable and eventful history. Institutions are strong which are built into ages of accumulated growth and achievement. Human nature everywhere has roots in the past. We all have historic feelers, which reach out, like the tendrils of a vine, for something to lay hold of, and to steady our faith. A thing is presumptively true if it is old. A faith which has been handed down through ages of inquiry has solidity in the very fact of its endurance. Nothing else tries a

truth, a book, an institution, a system, a man, as time does. Any thing that has lived long, has so far proved its right to live.

This principle has special pertinence in matters of religion. To religious institutions, time is a hint of eternity. A creed which remote ages originated, and have sent down to later days, must have in it central truths which the world needs. A Church which dates back for its beginning to the Abrahamic pilgrimage is venerable for its power of continuance. Its longevity is a history. The spirit of worship is deepened by the use of liturgic forms, in which holy men and women of other generations have expressed their faith. It is a most formative element in the religious culture of children, that they are taught to pray in the words which a godly ancestry have hallowed. To offer the prayers which their fathers offered, and to sing the hymns which their mothers sang, will set going sanctifying influences which will grow with their growth.

Will not the use of ancient forms degenerate into nothing but form? Always possibly; never necessarily. I seriously question whether such repetition induces any more formality than the silent attempt of listeners to follow the impromptu thought of a leader in extemporaneous prayer. Prayer impromptu may be the superior to the leader; but, to the hearer, the following is a difficult and complicated act. Such prayer to the hearer is a series of surprises. It requires a

quick mind to follow it with no loss of devotional sincerity. To children it is commonly a dead loss of time. They do not participate in it, and are not reverently interested in it. During the first fifteen years of a child's life, the public devotions of our churches are generally a blank.

Try the experiment with an intelligent child of eight years. Ask him what he was thinking of during the "long prayer." I venture to think you will be startled by the answer, for the evidence it will give you, that, for any religious value of the service to him, he might as well have been on the playground. Is this the best we can do to make our sanctuaries contribute to the religious culture of our children?

But, granting the peril of formality in the use of an ancient liturgy, the form which ages have sanctified can not lose *all* its sacredness in the use. Probably the peril is nowhere greater than among a crowd of college-students. Yet in Oriel College, England, the same form, in part, is in use to-day that was there five hundred years ago. A recent visitor testifies that it is rehearsed with apparent reverence. That must be a brutish mind which could rehearse it otherwise. Is the man living, who was taught to repeat the Lord's Prayer at five years of age, who can gabble it at the age of fifty? John Quincy Adams, in his eighty-fourth year, repeated every night the old stanza of infant-worship,—

"Now I lay me down to sleep," etc.

I have recently heard it said, that, as the air of "Home, Sweet Home" is the most memorable music in the world for its power over the human mind, this prayer of infancy is the most memorable poetry. One can well believe it. This and the Lord's Prayer have been the most potent educators of infancy and childhood that the world has known. If places are revered for their antiquity, and their association with the great and good of other times, much more is the language sacred in which they have communed with God.

This reverence for historic continuity as a factor in religious culture is developed in no other Protestant sect so profoundly as in the Church of England. By her fidelity to it, she does good service to the Church of the future. The only thing in which other denominations cultivate it largely is their hymnology. But why should we not foster it in the service of prayer, as well as in the service of song? We teach our children to pray in the words of the Lord's Prayer. Why should we stop there in our recognition of the fact that prayer has a history? Might not our worship be enriched by sometimes using the prayers of Chrysostom and St. Augustine and Jeremy Taylor? We sing the hymn of St. Bernard: why not pray his prayer as well?

One other element of religious life, for which we have reason to respect the Anglican Church, is that of order in religious observances, and a consequent distaste for reckless change. This ten-

dency easily runs to the extreme. A Church is unfaithful to the chief end of its being if it is nothing but a conservative machine. Its venerable liturgy is an abomination if it is the service of a treadmill. Yet the taste which is thus abused is indispensable to permanent religious growth. There is no conservative power without it. We are creatures of routine in religion, as in other things. The Scriptures recognize this; and Nature indorses it, in the institution of the sabbath. Even the animal world echoes, in its dumb way, this demand of human nature. Our beasts of burden fail us before the time if we deny them their sabbaths. Life itself is distributed by sevens. The stellar universe is engineered on a sublime system of routine, more exact than clockwork. Besides, duties which have to do with God, surely require to be performed with reverent decency; and to this, fixedness of succession and recurrence is auxiliary. The foundation for it is built deep in the constitution of mind.

Episcopal usage, in this respect, though to the taste of many it is too restrictive of individual liberty, yet to as many more is helpful and strengthening. In periods of religious disorder, when zeal runs away with wisdom, we find reason to prize the help of Episcopal conservatism and propriety. A reverent faith at such times always leans that way. The late Rev. Dr. Hawes of Hartford was, by temperament and training, a Puritan of the Puritans. The athletic and progressive virtues of

his Puritan ancestry were as innate in his blood as in theirs. Yet at a time of religious effervescence in Connecticut, when zeal ran riot, even to profaneness, he said, "I thank God for the existence of the Episcopal Church." We all have reason for the same thank-offering, when popular reverence is overborne by religious frenzy.

This suggestion is the more significant because of our denominational faith in revivals of religion. We believe in revivals. Our history is full of them. Our great preachers have been honored of God in great awakenings of religious life. Our theory of preaching is adjusted to the quickening of great assemblies by the Spirit of God. The history of New England especially has been illumined by days of Pentecost on which her pulpit has spoken as with tongues of flame.

One consequence of a great history is the danger of an extreme. The better the thing, the more open is it to abuse. Our Puritan denominations have sometimes encountered the peril of too exclusive reliance on revivals for church-extension. Imperfect education in the ministry tends to wild and wasteful ways in the conduct of revivals. We need the balancing weight of more conservative tastes.

We can not follow the lead of the Episcopal Church in this thing with unqualified trust. We should be false to the divine providence in our history if we should do that. Yet with entire fidelity to our own traditions, we may wisely learn

something from Episcopal faith in ancient ways. We can use more faithfully the principle of Christian nurture in the training of our children. We can arrest the decline of infant baptism with the whole train of duties and privileges which it involves. We can assume in our system of activities that the children of the Church shall be worthy of her full membership in the natural order of religious growth. The form of Episcopal "confirmation" is not essential, but the thing it signifies is so. We need it. We should abandon the theory of despair, that children must for a time be reprobates, and then be converted by convulsive revolution. That theory is of Satanic origin.

We can set a guard also more faithfully against the abuses of revivals. We can keep our pulpits out of the hands of ignorant or half-educated men. If our polity is not such that it can protect our churches from the inroad of unworthy pastors, we should create a polity that will. We can give the place which of right belongs to them, to men of cultured minds and refined tastes, and not compel such men to take back seats in our churches. Our ways of doing things would be improved by such precautions and safeguards. We can even afford to make some sacrifice of numbers to improved quality. Some ways of doing things which are popular among us we should silently lay aside.

In our Puritan communion, there are other ideas than those here enumerated, which are too valuable to permit us to leave the Church of our fathers

in search of wisdom. We will rather import what we need than to exile ourselves. We are more than pardonable if we believe, that, on the whole, we should suffer loss if we should exchange our own for any other of the great Churches of Christendom. We confess to a childlike clinging to the Church of the Pilgrims. When we see what it has made New England, and what it has achieved for our country and for the world, we can not help feeling as De Quincey did, in view of the religious history of England, "I thank God that I am the child of a magnificent Church." Our Pilgrim faith surely has more than a "magnificent" history. Oh those grand, lofty, unworldly souls! How lordly were their aspirations, yet how childlike their trust! How profound was their sense of eternity, and how close their approach to God! They are sacred to us above all earthly fame. Princes of blood royal were they all. We say of our Jerusalem, "If I forget thee, may my right hand forget her cunning!" The child who is born to such a faith, should give to it the strength of his manhood, and die in it at the end exultingly.

This, like all rules governing a life's choices, must be held with elasticity enough to enclose exceptional cases. Denominational affinities are, in part, matters of temperament. There is an Episcopal temperament, as there is a Methodist temperament. There are men who, though born under Puritan constellations, are born churchmen.

Not their tastes only, not their acquired convictions chiefly, but their inmost spiritual structure, inclines them to conservative opinions and fixed liturgic forms. They take in more spiritual vitality from an Episcopal atmosphere than from any other. Such men should be allowed to follow the bent of their natures without restrictive criticism. Let them go where those who are born Puritans can not follow them. In the exercise of the same liberty, let the vast majority of men of the Puritan make count it their honor to abide by the faith and polity of their fathers.

Very significant testimony to this effect was once uttered by that accomplished scholar and model churchman, the Rev. Dr. Washburn of New York. If I do not mistake, he was born in New England, and passed his youth in a Congregational church. In early manhood he took orders in the Episcopal Church, and became one of the brilliant ornaments of her pulpit. It could have been no want of success in his life's work which led him to say to me near the close of his life, "My experience and observation have led me to the conviction that a young man of Protestant training had better stay in the Church in which God has given him birth." Much as he loved the Church of his adoption, and proud as she was of him, he thought, that, as a rule, the gain from the transition was not sufficient to warrant so grave a change.

As a rule, then, we of Puritan antecedents can have no inducement, on the whole, to abandon our

birthright. But we may enrich it, and augment the resources of our religious culture, by studying the ideas, and importing some of the usages, of the old Mother Church of England.

## XXII.

### PRAYER AS A STATE OF CHRISTIAN LIVING.

PRAYER in real life is an object of discovery and surprises. Said one believer, "I had been a long time in the Church, before I found out that prayer is something which one can make a business of." A growing experience of the divine life will constantly discover something new in prayer as a moral force. Three stages of growth are commonly discernible respecting it in the Christian consciousness. They are, prayer as a refuge in emergencies, prayer as a habit at appointed times, and prayer as a state of continuous living.

The privilege and power of prayer in this last development of it are realized by comparatively few. It was one of the infrequent expressions of his inner life by the late Professor Stuart, "I have learned that the value of prayer does not depend so much on its intensity in moods, or its regularity in times, as on its constancy as a continuos way of living. We need to live in a *state* of prayer." I quote his remark substantially from memory. Suffering had taught him the truth of it. Few men reach the discovery, except through some sort of disciplinary trial. In spiritual experience,

necessity is the mother of discovery, as it is of invention in material things.

Our fathers, especially of the earlier generations in this country, seem to have understood this phase of prayer more profoundly than we do. They understood it in a more practical way. They prayed for what they wanted, and they expected to receive it. If they did not receive it, the failure set them upon great "searchings of heart." The result commonly was, that they prayed again. They had faith in importunity. They noted the fact, that the promise, "Ask and ye shall receive," was given in immediate sequence to a parable which represents a failure in prayer.

There is something sublime in their application of prayer to the common exigencies of life. Look at the records of the ancient Courts of Probate in New England. How did their Wills read? First and above all, "I commit my soul to the Infinite and Almighty God!" So they were wont to go about the work of setting their house in order for their last journey. Look at their religious diaries. They are childlike in the devotional faith they record. The writers take God into their confidence as a Friend. They make their business His business. If one of them moves to a new home, he leaves the old one, and consecrates the new one, with prayer. If he buys a house or a horse, he prays over his bargain. A harvest, a journey, a "cold spell," a dry summer, an autumnal freshet,—the things which make up the talk of a country

village,—make up also the converse of good men with God. Their faith was not restricted to Sundays and sermons, to funerals and epidemics.

The articles of their daily food are, each one, a gift of God, for which thanksgiving is prompt. Many times in the history of those days is the gift of Indian corn gratefully acknowledged. It was a new esculent to them, of ready and abundant growth; and it often saved them from starvation. The pious chronicler of the early days of Concord writes, “The Lord is pleased to provide great store of fish in the spring-time.” Again, he records, “Let no man make a jest of pumpkins; for, with this fruit, the Lord was pleased to feed His people till their corn and cattle were increased.”

In such familiar uses of religion, there is always danger of twaddle. But nothing of that sort mars the manliness of the olden times. Religion was admirably weighted with good sense. It made a compound of tough, practical fiber. One of the ancient customs was, to invite the minister to come and ask the divine blessing on the land of the farmer. “Blessing the land,” it was called. A clergyman once, on being called thus to visit a farm on Cape Cod, found it in a miserable plight for the want of good husbandry. “No,” said he, “this land does not need prayer: it needs manure.” Such were the homely and sensible ways in which the Most High was welcomed to their plain and frugal homes. Was ever Wordsworth’s “plain living and high thinking” more grandly illustrated?

Even the comic side of prayer, in certain conditions, did not escape them, yet did not disturb them. A hundred years ago a good citizen of Sudbury attended the "Thursday Lecture" in Boston, and heard the preacher pray for rain. At the close of the service he took the preacher's hand, and said, "You Boston ministers, as soon as a tulip wilts under your windows, go to church, and pray for rain till all Sudbury and Concord are under water." It was comical, and they both saw it. But, none the less, they believed, that, if good men prayed for rain, they got rain. Failure was only a reason for praying again. It was very unscientific. Be it so; but a grand fact which underlies science was expressed in it. The grandest life man can live was in it, settle it with science as we may.

This profound faith in prayer as a constant accompaniment of life was the secret of the extreme *length* of the prayers of our fathers. They often interpreted literally the command, "Continue in prayer." Their ministers sometimes indulged in such prolixity of devotion, that, if one of their successors should imitate them now on a Sunday, his congregation would ask for his resignation on Monday. It was because, as a rule, they succeeded in it. Prayer was the most effective force they knew. It swayed the universe. They knew nothing of power in steam, except to raise the lids of their teakettles. They did not know lightning by the name of electricity. They did not know that

gravitation held their feet to the ground, and that, without its permission, they could not weigh a pound of sugar, or adjust their knee-buckles. The Corliss engine and the Cunarders and Hoe's printing-press were not. If they had been predicted, they would have been treated like the "moon-hoax" of later days. The telephone would have savored of witchcraft to them. They would have kept a fast-day before using it. But they knew prayer as the superlative of all forces. They used it in good faith.

They prayed long, therefore, because it was their way of accomplishing their objects. Objects which, in their theory of life, ranked first in value, they could achieve in no other way. In vulgar parlance, "it paid" to pray. They never heard the Italian proverb,—or, if they did, they heard only to scorn it,—"If you would succeed, you must not be too good." To their notion, goodness was the prime success. Every thing they did, therefore, they baptized with prayer. Where Lord Nelson would have broken a bottle of brandy over the prow of a ship at the launch, they would have sent for the minister to offer a prayer for safe sailing. Their praying was the best half of their doing.

"Father Wilson" of the First Church of Boston often prayed two hours continuously. Men came in from Dedham to hear his prayers, as they now do to hear Phillips Brooks's sermons. They used to caution each other not to ask him to pray for a thing unless they were prepared to have it with all

its corollaries and implications. Once, at least, he was begged to cease praying for rain, because, since he began, some of the neighboring towns had been flooded. Science may say what it will, or can, of these things. But there was a real life in them. Nothing was more real in those heroic times. The revolution for independence was not a more efficient factor in the world's destiny than the power of prayer which was put into history by those grand believers. After all, it is faith in the unseen that sways the world.

Here, also, was the secret of their resolute and cheerful temper. It is an egregious mistake to paint them as men of disconsolate conscience. That they were sour-faced men, is as much a fiction as the "Blue Laws." Mr. Emerson thus describes them: "A sadness as of piled mountains fell on them. Life became ghastly, joyless, a pilgrim's progress, . . . beleagured round with doleful histories of Adam's fall and curse behind us, with doomsdays and purgatorial and penal fires before us; and the heart of the seer and the heart of the listener sank within them." This is the hereditary notion of the Pilgrims. It goes down from father to son, bulging with accumulating lies, as it advances, till its figure has become hideous.

Never was there a more stupid blunder in the judgment of historic characters. They were not such men. Jeremiah, the prophet of the broken heart, was not their model: St. Paul was their model. Their ministers preached a score of ser-

mons on the Epistles to the Romans to one on the books of the “weeping prophet.” Their minds were freighted with great convictions. They lived in the rapids of great events. Their piety was sympathetic with both. Such piety is always of the resolute and cheering type.

It has been said, that no man can be a true poet who has not a cheerful temper. It is more strictly true, that no man can be a Christian of the Pilgrim type without such a temper. No man or woman, without such a temper, could have lived through the first winter at Plymouth after the landing in 1620. Such believers live in light, not in twilight. They may not be hilarious men, but they have and give the good cheer of indomitable courage. Our fathers, especially of the earlier generations, were men of that guild. They were men of the meridian and the morning.

It is not given to men of “ghastly, joyless life,” whose minds are intent on “purgatorial and penal fires,” to do the deeds our fathers did. Downcast and sour-faced men, weighed down by “a sadness as of piled mountains,” are not the men who build States, and emancipate nations. Men who walk with eyes on the ground, “with hearts sinking within them,” do not found colleges in their poverty, when the gift of a bushel of corn is a sacrifice. They do not form churches, and free governments, which illuminate the globe in after-times. It takes stalwart and uplooking faith to make history. Such men were the fathers. If

they observed more fast-days than we do, they observed more days of thanksgiving as well, and did it more religiously. There is not in the world's history an institution which blends a profound piety with social festivity more beautifully than the New-England Thanksgiving Day of the olden time. That and the English Christmas are twin products of a cheerful religious faith.

Our fathers prayed more in every way than we do. If they had personal conflicts with Satan, they conducted them in a soldierly way. They fought like men who meant to win. They did win. If they hanged witches, they did it in dead earnest, believing that they were in conscious conflict with the Devil. They grappled with the arch-enemy with stout heart, where many of our day, with the same faith in malign powers, would have run away. They were born conquerors, and they had the reward of conquest. They lived, in the main, a life of victory and of gladness. The fact is, that, like all successful men in the tug of life, they had no time to mope; and they had as little disposition as time.

But the grand secret of their gladsome courage was the *state* of prayer in which they lived. They had faith that whatever ought to interest them did interest God. Whatever ought to engage their faculties, and fill up their life, did engage the perfections of God. They were the subject of divine decrees. God had ordained from eternity whatsoever should come to pass, and had elected them

to be His instruments in bringing things to pass. They were co-workers with God, and could not be overreached or defeated in life's work. Reverently they talked with God as with a Friend. Theirs was the faith of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob. Therefore they enjoyed God. If ever men lived, who, in the sense of lofty courageous hope, enjoyed life, they were such men.

Prayer as a state of holy living is abundantly recognized in the Scriptures. "Continuing instant in prayer." "In every thing by prayer, let your requests be made known." "Continue in prayer, and watch." "Praying always with all prayer and supplication." Such fragments come to view in the Bible, like the edges of geologic strata on the surface of the earth, signs of the deep creation underneath. Anna continued all night in prayer. St. Paul's model of a Christian widow was one who lived in prayer night and day. St. Peter in prison was remembered by the church in prayer without ceasing. Far back in the elder dispensation, prayer as a continuity of exalted privilege dawned on the Psalmist's mind. In a tone of triumph he sings, "At evening and morning and noon will I pray." Constancy of devotional spirit is inborn in the nature of holy living. One age has handed it down to another in the line of biblical revelation.

Such continuity of devotional habit gives large place in a godly life to ejaculatory prayer. St. Augustine, Madame Guyon, John Tauler, Luther,

President Edwards, Edward Payson, and a host of others, were often overheard in fragmentary colloquy with God. Professor Stuart used to hallow his learned researches by interspersing audibly chants of the Psalms in the original Hebrew. On one occasion, in taking his morning walk, he observed in a door-yard as he passed it, a rare and beautiful specimen of a French dahlia. He paused; and, leaning over the fence, he was heard ejaculating in low tones his thanksgiving for such an impressive proof of the benevolence of God.

Such moments of holy utterance were the feeders which gave to these men their spiritual strength. Who can tell how much they owed even of their intellectual vigor to such spiritual resources? Every faculty of a good man's mind receives increment from his virtues. Gifts grow on the strength of graces. Zinzendorf used to write little notes to "the Lord Christ." This is what every religious diary ought to be. No human eye but that of the author should ever see it. Thomas à Kempis says of Christ, "He alone is a world of friends. That man never knew what it was to be familiar with God, who complains of the want of friends while God is with him."

We need the state of prayer as a counteracting force to the state of temptation in which we are always living. In such a world as this, life itself is one long temptation. The defense needs to be proportionate to the peril. The spirit of our age is skeptical of the reality of Satan. Few of us

have the vivid faith which our fathers had in his personality as the chief of a malignant empire. We have reason to believe his subject angels to be a great multitude. A “legion” of them once held possession of one soul. They give to temptation a fearful force and perilous ubiquity. We have to contend with principalities and powers. No man is beyond the reach of their malign enchantments. Here, there, and everywhere, now, then, and always, personal and mighty foes are at hand to allure men to ruin. If spiritual attributes give any advantage over minds enclosed in fleshly forms, tempters have that advantage in this world of ours. We do not know that they ever slumber, or are ever absent. That saintly woman was a wise one who taught her children to take example from the Devil as the most industrious being in the created universe. There is but one refuge for a mortal man living under such conditions of spiritual trial. It is to live in a state of prayer as constant as the peril. God has ordained no other means by which we can summon from unseen worlds spiritual allies to re-enforce our conflict with spiritual foes.

Luther may have had an exaggerated estimate of the attributes of Satan, and of his liberty of access to human souls. His imagination realized the presence of the Adversary in visible and audible signs. He heard voices threatening or seductive over his left shoulder. “Ha! you are there, —are you?” was the salutation he once gave, in response to an evil thought which he believed to

be a suggestion from the Devil. His vision of Satan in his cell at Erfurt, when he threw his ink-stand at him, may have been, probably was, a strained and unnatural fancy, yet possibly not. The Reformer lived in an age when Satan was at large in great liberty. Abnormal manifestations of his presence may have been becoming to the crisis, as they seem to have been in our Saviour's lifetime, and as in the judgment of some they are now, in some of the phenomena of spiritualism. At all events, Luther's extreme, if it was such, was a safer error than the incredulous security from malign enchantments in which men of our times are living. Spiritual perils are the more fatal for being unseen and unheard. Odorless malaria is the most destructive to life. Burglars enter our homes in velvet slippers, and in the dark. Their dark-lanterns do not waken us from our slumber, though held at our bedside. So do invisible tempters creep stealthily upon us and around us, night and day. Our disbelief in their existence is their safety from detection. Every man has an unseen enemy at his left shoulder. Better is Luther's credulity than our dead faith. Such a continuous state of peril demands a continuous state of prayer as its offset and counter-action.

We need the state of prayer also as a corrective of the restlessness and turmoil which life in this world engenders. Our life is full of distractions from spiritual peace. We call God our Father.

He is a wise Father; He does not cosset His child; He inclines rather to the robust discipline. Life to many of us has a good deal of rough experience, like that of the backwoods. We often find ourselves in tumultuous agitations which seem to forbid communion with God. Emerson says that "the human race are afflicted with St. Vitus' dance. A man acts, not from one motive, but from many shifting fears and short motives. It is as if he were ten or twenty less men than himself, acting at discord with one another; so that the result of most lives is zero."

Is it so? Where, then, shall we find the unifying force? How shall we obtain concinnity and a purpose? How otherwise than by coming into God's atmosphere, and living at one with Him? Only so shall we emancipate ourselves from the thralldom of anxieties and vacillations which take all joy out of life. So shall a great peace come to us. Not the most gifted, but the most godly, know most of this.

Often it is a discovery to us that the consistence of our character can not stand the strain of prolonged disease. Our best resolves give way before physical pain. The four walls of a sick-room are like those of the prison so contrived that one of them approached its opposite on rollers a foot in a day till it crushed the prisoner. Death found him a raving maniac. The monotony of a hopeless sick-room is intolerable to one not inured to it by long discipline. Surprises of evil overcome us in

hours of nervous prostration. The first thing that disclosed to Dr. Chalmers the futility of the moralism which was all the religion he had when he began his pastorate at Kilmany, was the discovery that it could not bear the scrutiny of the sick-bed. When brought face to face with death, he found out his need of something better than scientific culture to give him rest.

Rest in God is the great necessity of our nature when any thing brings a strain upon the fiber of our moral being. Sin tends always to unrest. It often creates tumults of conflict, and shocks of self-discovery. A keen conscience is an alert foe to peace of mind, unless it is *appeased* by something which brings the soul into sympathy with God in its choices. The complacency of God is the only thing that can give a man complacency in himself. Unsettled questions of duty, also, often create perturbations and alarms. Doubts of truth in some minds open abysses of despair. Such are contingencies in even a good man's life of probationary discipline.

Even the innocent cares of life are not always innocent of encroachment on mental rest. Those which Montgomery calls "the insect cares," sometimes are so numerous, that, like an atmosphere full of stinging creatures, they make life a burden. The shame a man feels for his minding them is itself a discomfort. Pascal lamented, that, in certain moods, he could not bear the alighting of a fly on his face without irritation. One godly man

wept because he lost his self-control, and swore profanely at the sting of a hornet.

Toil for a living in such conditions as this world furnishes is a daily discomfort. Human labor is heavily weighted with human wrongs and humiliations. The common conception of it is that of conflict with other men. A battle with the world, we call it: as if another man's success were our failure. Competitions, heart-burnings, rivalries, deceits, overreachings, treacheries, enmities, and oppressions make up large portions of the life of trade. Penitentiaries and dungeons are symbols of our laws. Both are constructed for self-defense. We have little notion of what labor for a living would be in a world not racked and ruined by sin. Think of a store of jewelry, or a bank, without lock or bolt! Imagine a world in which protective laws and retributive penalties should be unknown! Conceive of a world in which no state should contain a prison, and no county a jail; and in which a rifle and a revolver should be unintelligible relics of a lost art! What a life of labor in such a world would be, labor in this world is not.

To encounter happily the conditions of self-support in this world, we need to make life a continuous prayer. We must retire into God's silence, in the stillness of a state of prayer. We need that condition of things of which Emerson gives us a glimpse, when he says, "When a man lives with God, his voice shall be as sweet as the

murmur of a brook and the rustle of the corn.” Poets send us to the works of nature for it. Very good, if in the works of nature we discover God’s thoughts. Men in the tug of life and the antagonisms of trade must know where to find the lull which nothing else gives to a perturbed spirit but the consciousness of being one with a personal God. This is the Psalmist’s thought, when he speaks of the “light of God’s countenance.” Without this divine incandescence, nature is a cheat. An oak is no more than a bramble-bush. Orion is no more than a firefly. Nothing above, beneath, around, has in it the divine idea. Nothing, therefore, gives help or compensation.

Sir Fowell Buxton was engaged for twenty years in the British Parliament, in a conflict with almost all the dominant forces of the empire, for the emancipation of the slaves. To this he added the distracting cares of an immense business inherited from his father. Near the close of his life he wrote to his son, “The experience of my life is, that events always go right when they are undertaken in the spirit of prayer. I have found assistance given, and obstructions removed, in a way which has convinced me that some secret power has been at work.”

This is what we all need,—ability to carry on the complicated affairs of a laborious life with a sense of *rest* in a secret force, not our own, which is all the while co-operating with us. Meditation and prayer are twin-helpers to this spiritual repose.

The habit of “undertaking things in the spirit of prayer” is the secret of happiness in a life of toil. The busiest and most heavily burdened life is full of spiritual analogies, by the aid of which thought may alternate in quick succession between earth and heaven. Thus the most intense and diversified life may be enclosed in God’s life, and made tributary to His plans. In no other way can we live in sympathy with God, or be assured of His sympathy with us.

The fact deserves emphasis, that prayer, as a continuous state of religious living, is independent of conditions. No calamity of life can overpower it, or make it untimely. It becomes an atmosphere, pure, life-giving, tonic, invariable. It is difficult for religious moods to exist under its equal pressure. In glad hours, it is a joy; and in sad hours, a comfort. It keeps life in equilibrium against disturbing forces. Like a finely finished chronometer, it is self-adjusting to variations of temperature. St. Paul struck out a scintillation of its virtue, when he said, “If God be for us, who can be against us?” We believers of the common stock come to it often as a discovery which takes us by surprise. We respond, “Surely enough. Who? Where *is* the fury of the oppressor?”

Yet another fact deserves mention. It is, that every human life contains peculiarities of probationary trial. Every man finds that *his* lot is, in some respects, singular. As no two faces are alike, no two lives are the same in point of disci-

pline. Each one seems to be singled out for a test of character, which no other one is called to bear with the same degree of severity.

The proverb says that every house has its skeleton. It is more forcibly true, that every man has his thorn. St. Paul had his: we all follow in our several ways. One, like the apostle, has his thorn in bodily disease. A disease develops itself, of which he says, "Any thing but this!" Another discovers his burden in an infelicity of temperament, which keeps him in a chronic state of self-contempt. A third is prematurely, and, as it seems to him, ruthlessly, retired from active usefulness, in which he does not think it vanity in him to believe that he did the world some service. He vexes himself in secret with the problem why God should have deprived Himself of so valuable an auxiliary. A fourth thinks he is selected—and perhaps he is—for one of those *clusters* of sorrows which have created the proverb, that "misfortunes never come singly."

Some men succumb to such peculiarities of discipline. Faith expires. Any thing else they could have borne, but why this? Another man's trials they could have met serenely, but their own seem a great mystery. It is not difficult to most of us to bear the troubles of other men. But, when our own are the test of faith, no spirit is left in us, if we belong to the class of these elect sufferers. The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint.

For such specialities of probationary destiny, we need a special welcome to the recesses of the hidden friendship of God. Else we may come suddenly to the border-line of despair. Every man carries the possibility of suicide in his destiny. We can never know what might have been, but for the loving care of God in forestalling our weakness in critical exigencies. To gain the refuge of such hidden life, we need unwavering fellowship with Christ. We need sometimes to rise up with Him a great while before day, and to depart into a solitary place, continuing all night in prayer; "the morning-star finding Him where the evening-star left Him."

Great emergencies are the final test of great forces. If ever a suspense of faith in a life of prayer might reasonably take place, we should imagine that such a collapse would attend that extreme of human woe in which reason itself gives way. What can prayer do for a mind which has ceased to be a mind? What result an induction from the history of insane-asylums might give, I do not know. But, in the unwritten history of insanity, facts are not wanting, which, so far as they go, tend to prove that the long *use* of prayer in the habits of a healthy religious life generates a remedial force which reaches over into the mind's derangements and entanglements, and helps to bring it again into self-possession. Having long moved in the grooves of prayer, the lost mind, by means of those grooves, has sometimes found its

way back to the living world. An instance from real life will illustrate this.

Many years ago a clergyman in New England, after a long period of godly service, became, as his physicians and friends believed, hopelessly insane. So far as the diagnosis of cerebral disease could determine, remedy was impossible. They only waited, praying for his release. His delusions, among other vagaries, took at last the form of religious melancholy. The unpardonable sin weighed grievously upon his conscience. He told his attendants, that he had been, through all his life, a hypocrite. He thought it had been revealed to him that he was going to hell. He had been told that no other place in the universe was fit for him, or he for it. The calmness of despair brooded over his days and nights.

It was useless to reason with a mind which had no reason. But at last, one of his clerical brethren resolved on an experiment. He said to his afflicted brother substantially this: "Well, Dr. B—, it may be true. If God has revealed it to you, it must be so. Doubtless, some appalling examples of hypocrisy and retribution must be held up as a warning to the universe, and you may be one of them. Will it not be wise for you to lay your plans for it, till you are otherwise instructed, and think what you will *do* in hell? You will not wish to be surprised there by an unknown experience. What will you do with yourself? How will you fill up the time there?" At this weird suggestion,

the good man's religious faith first righted itself, and sprang into its wonted channel of operation. He replied, "I will pray the very first thing. I will set up a prayer-meeting the very first day!" At that juncture of tangled thought, in which he "saw men as trees walking," his reason began to right itself. That also sprang into its accustomed logical grooves. He thought it at first to be a new discovery, that wherever a sinner could pray, and where God was within hearing, that could not be hell. From this feeble hold upon his old trains of ideas, he proceeded till his old faith came back to him in full, and with it his old thinking-power. He lived for a short time after, and died in full possession of his faculties and his Christian faith.

Isolated facts like these must not be laden with inferences which they do not bear. But taken in connection with other facts illustrative of the sanitary effect of religious services, and specially of Christian song, upon the condition of the insane, they do give something more than the interest of conjecture to the idea that a profound affinity exists between *worship* and mental *health*. Prayer is an element of moral being which life craves. Why should it not be a remedial agent in mental disease? Nothing in psychological or physical science hints the contrary.

## XXIII.

### WHY DO I BELIEVE CHRISTIANITY TO BE A REVELATION FROM GOD?

AN esteemed correspondent requests me to give publicly an answer to this inquiry. In reply, I must premise that my faith in Christianity is largely an inheritance. I trace it back through the life-blood of nine generations of godly forefathers. I am not vain enough to believe that I have any such independence of ancestral influences that I can approach the question in a state of mental equipoise. I do not believe such a state to be either necessary or desirable. The laws of heredity are among the factors which create any wise man's belief in a system of religion. The attempt to be rid of them can only create a bias the other way. They may be reasonably tested: they can not be reasonably ignored.

In testing my ancestral faith, I find it confirmed by the following facts; namely,—

1. In examining the sacred books of Christianity, I find there a Person whose being seems to me to be a supernatural disclosure of God. Jesus Christ is the great miracle of history. I can not reconcile His character and life with the theory

that He was man only. I do not know enough of the psychology of infinite being to deny the possibility, or even to question the probability, that deity and humanity are blended in one person. It is as likely to be true as the opposite. It must be determined, as other possible things are, by credible proofs. Those proofs point to such a mysterious blending in the person of Jesus Christ. Napoleon expressed the natural belief of a fair-minded man of the world who came to the question with a balanced mind open to the weight of evidence, when he said, "I know man, and I declare to you that Jesus Christ was not a mere man." If Jesus was not God, His words disprove His honesty, and His actions disprove His good sense.

In the four fragmentary narratives of His birth and life and death, I find peculiarities which are unparalleled in biographical literature. No evidence appears of imbecility or insanity or knavery. Yet one of these must be true of Him if He was a man, and no more. He makes assertions respecting the significance of His own Being to all mankind, which no honest man would make in his right mind if he were man only. He assumes an authority and a relationship to the Most High, which a sane man could not honestly make if he were not in some mysterious sense conscious of identity with the Most High. He takes upon Himself the responsibility of a mission to this world which no man could believe to be laid upon himself, and could seriously undertake to discharge,

without a loss of reason, unless it were accompanied by a consciousness of divine power to sustain it.

By the laws of mental disease as recognized by sanitary science, a mind conscious of only human resources, and yet honestly believing itself to be the Saviour of a fallen world through atoning pains, should become a maniac. The mental equipoise of this mysterious Being under the disclosures of His mission to His own consciousness, and in the awful solitude of it, as it advanced to its fulfillment, is itself a miracle. It is a token of a Power within, not limited by human conditions, nor subject to human infirmities. It is not in human nature to bear the consciousness of such a mediatorial relation between God and man without a wreck of reason hopeless and irremediable. The psychological phenomena developed by the life of this anomalous Person are inexplicable upon any theory of His nature, but that affirmed by St. John, "The Word was with God, and the Word was God."

2. I find, further, in the teachings of this anomalous Being, the germs of a system of ethics which can not be of human origin. That is to say, it is unlike man as he has expressed himself in other ways. Fragments of it are found elsewhere. But as a whole, and specially in its freedom from absurdities and excrescences, it stands alone in the history of human thought. It is as remarkable for what it does not say, as for what it does. In the

truthfulness and power of its appeal to the best intuitions of the human mind, it is unequaled. I can not account for it on any other theory so probably as on that which derives it from the mind of God.

Other religions profess to be founded on sacred books. They contain the elements of ethical systems. In the form of aphorism and of ritual, they attempt a moral government of human life. One feature marks them all as the work of imperfect mind, and of mind debilitated in its intellectual processes by moral infirmities. It is the intermingling with fragmentary truth of much that is false, much that is petty, and much that is impure. They are in this respect such as might reasonably be expected from an uninspired human intellect. If Christianity were of human origin, we should look for similar excrescences in its ethical teachings. We do not find them. We find nothing that lowers the dignity of moral truth, and nothing that offends the purity of a good conscience. It is the only religion known to history which appreciates woman. This is a remarkable hint of its probable origin. Taken by itself, isolated from other evidences of its source, the Christian ethics would not be proof conclusive that Christianity is from God; but its character fits in with other proofs so strikingly that no other theory of its origin is so probable.

3. I find in other teachings of the Christian books, and especially in the Epistles of the New

Testament, the germs of a system of theologic belief which does not impress me as being from unaided human sources. No other religion has taught its equal. The sacred books of no other faith have contained its like. The true way to test its character is to imagine it blotted out of human history. Blot out all that it has contributed to human thought. What then? Would any thing remain worthy to be compared with it? What answer would Plato have given to this question? My conviction is, that when Plato longed for a teacher sent from heaven, the Pauline theology would have satisfied the longing. He would have said, "This is the system which my mind has craved." Therefore I must believe that the most probable, the only probable, theory of its origin is that, through inspiration of its human authors, it came from the Infinite Mind.

4. I find, moreover, in these sacred books, evidences of a growth which makes them one in structure and in aim. Ideas are started at the beginning which are expanded and deepened at the end. The Book of Leviticus is fulfilled in the Epistles to the Hebrews and Galatians. The sacrifice of Abel finds its interpretation in the crucifixion of Christ. One continuous chain of history, of prophecy, and of moral teaching, runs through the whole. No other succession of thought in the history of literature discloses such a unity in the result, or any approach to it. It is incredible that men of different ages and nations, and formed by

different languages and types of civilization, should have planned this unity of construction, and executed it with conscious purpose. Human productions of successive ages do not so lap over upon each other, in one consistent and consecutive design. Back of this anomaly in literature, there must have been one overruling and inspiring Mind. That mind can be none else than the mind of God. On the same principle on which I infer from the revelations of geology, an intelligent and continuous design in the construction of the earth's strata, I must infer the working of the same mind in the construction of the Bible. If the one can be the work of chance, or of impersonal law, the other may be.

5. I find this unity of the biblical structure becoming the more marvelous when I discover the central idea at which the whole is aimed. Starting with the primeval fact of expiatory sacrifice, I find this volume developing through a complicated ritual, and through the revelations of centuries, a way of salvation, which is adjusted to the profoundest cravings of our nature in the emergency of sin. It answers, as no other book has ever done, the great question of the ages, "How shall man be just with God?" It appeases, as no other religion has ever done, the wrath of a remorseful conscience. My nature springs in response to it, as does that of other men.

In this respect, it stands in marvelous accord with the cravings of the human mind, yet in

astounding contrast with all human devices to meet and satisfy those cravings. Other religions, as remedial systems designed to effect man's deliverance from guilt, are stupendous failures — melancholy proofs of man's need of a redemption which he is powerless to achieve. Christianity is the only religion which the human conscience approves as adequate to satisfy its own retributive sentiment, while it satisfies the same sentiment in the mind of God. I can not believe this way of deliverance from the catastrophe of sin, so perfect in its adjustments to the moral nature of both God and man, to have been a human invention. It is just like God to have devised it. It is unlike man. I must believe it to be the thought of God.

6. I find, still further, the process by which the biblical religion has grown to its maturity accompanied by events and revelations which are miraculous in their character. This book is largely historical in its materials. It is history seen and foreseen. A segment seems to be selected from the experience of mankind, and a divine plan wrought into its development. The evidence of this is scattered along the line, from its beginning to the end, in these supernatural occurrences. They appear whenever and wherever such occurrences seem to have been needed to attest the presence and agency of God. They are of all varieties in detail, from the fulfillment of a dream to the raising of the dead. The object of them was of such transcendent dignity as to justify

belief in miracle. They convinced contemporaries that they were supernatural in their character. I must believe, that, if I had been a witness to them, they would have convinced me of the same. By the laws of human testimony, I am bound to believe it now. They add to other evidences all the weight of present miracle in proof that the Book which records them is the Word of God.

7. The confirmation of my faith is reduplicated by the singular resemblance which I discover between the Christian religion and that taught by the phenomena of the natural world. The two are so remarkably alike, that they must be expressions of the same creative Mind. Each supports, by its alliance, the credit of the other. The material world is so replete with analogies, linking it with the revelations of the Scriptures, that, in one aspect of it, it seems as if it were created to illustrate and prove those revelations. Both teach the existence of the same God. Both proclaim the same attributes of His nature. Both affirm the same sacredness of Law. Both teach the same conceptions of the evil of sin. So far as the religion of nature goes, it covers the same ground with that of the Christian books. The Being who created the heavens and the earth must be the Being who constructed the Bible.

So far as the Bible differs in its teachings from the book of Nature, it is but an advance, not a contradiction, not an independent and dissimilar record. The peculiarities of the biblical religion

are those which the religion of nature leads us to expect. Nature teaches man's need of a revelation, and of such a revelation. Nature suggests what Christianity affirms. Nature inquires, and Christianity answers. Nature promises, and Christianity fulfills. Nature brings man to the Christian books, needy, craving, expectant: the books supply the need, satisfy the craving, and realize the expectation. This unity of a dual revelation of God is too manifest and significant to be ignored.

8. I find, in following the history of Christianity from the completion of the canon of its sacred books, one thing more. My faith in it as a revelation from God is confirmed by the faith of other minds. Mohammed recognized an important factor in all human beliefs, when he said that the faith of Fatima, then the only believer in his pretensions, strengthened his own. Such are the relations of the human mind to truth, that, what one mind believes, another mind has, so far forth, reason to believe. Applying this to the history of Christianity, the confirmation of individual faith becomes overwhelming. Success is not alone evidence of truth, but it is an immense tribute to the evidence drawn from other sources.

It is much to the purpose, therefore, that I find among the believers of Christianity those who, by proximity in time, were, of all men, best qualified to judge of the historic facts which it affirms. Following them, I see a long succession of believers, not the great and the wise alone, not the

ignorant and the weak alone, not the more impulsive sex alone, but minds of both sexes, of all ages, of every variety of condition and culture. Children and philosophers alike have found resources of moral strength in its teachings. It has swayed a larger proportion of the thinking-power of mankind than was ever given to any other system of religion or philosophy. It has created the most magnificent literatures and the most advanced civilization in history. Its great ideas have been central to the most vital reforms which men have achieved in government, and in the unwritten laws of social life. It has accomplished what no other religion has attempted in the elevation of woman. It is, above all others, the religion of culture, of freedom, and of progress. The faith men have given to it has thus proved itself to be a working faith, such faith as men give only to things of supreme worth. Its believers have borne witness to it in the face of torture, and at the cost of life. Women have been buried alive in testimony to its truth. Children have been crucified rather than to betray it. Every form of human testimony which a religion *can* have, this religion has commanded for ages. And this immense accumulation of human faith, which has created such magnificent history, has been given to it on the ground that it is the religion of a Book inspired by God.

This confirmatory evidence proves to me that it is what it claims to be,—a religion for the world

and for all time. Other religions are local, national, tribal : this is world-wide. Other religions grow old, and become effete : this grows youthful in the increase of its age. Others are religions of the past : this is the religion of the future. It has become an axiom among wise men, that, if we wish to make any thing live to the end of time, we must identify it with the religion of Christ. This is just such a revelation as I should expect from a benevolent God to a world suffering for the want of a revelation. It is such as I could not reasonably hope for from any other source. •

In this faith I have rested for many years, with a mental repose unbroken by an hour of misgiving or wavering. If it is not true, nothing is true. If it is not from God, nothing is from God. If God has not disclosed Himself in it, He has not done so in the discoveries of geology and astronomy. Nature gives no hint of an intelligent Creator and a benevolent Ruler of the universe, if the Christian Scriptures are not the work of an almighty and omniscient Author. The religion of Christ and the religion of Nature stand or fall together in their claims to the faith of the human mind,



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